Tamil TIMES

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"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."

– Voltaire

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- **Options for a Settlement**
- **LTTE to Challenge Ban in India**
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- **14 Army Men Face Court Martial**
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- **MGR: Myth and the Man – Book Review**

Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa

Brigadier Wijaya Wimalaratne

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SEEKING UNITED NATIONS INTERVENTION

Only last month, the government and the defence establishment in Sri Lanka claimed that they were on the door step of the northern Jaffna peninsula following the so-called successes in the wake of 'Operation Balawegaya II' launched by the armed forces against the Tamil Tigers. Colombo-based newspapers were replete with accounts of 'victories' and the government's media flagship, the Lake House group of newspapers editorially predicted that the 'End is drawing near'.

Within days of that claim, on the government's own admission over 120 service personnel died and many more were injured and lost a vast quantity of weapons and ammunition to the Tigers, and because of these losses and resistance from the Tigers the much publicised further offensive had to be delayed. On top of that came the most devastating blow ever to be suffered by the Sri Lankan forces when, on 8 August, ten of the most senior officers, including the much respected overall Commander of the Northern Region, Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, were killed in a Tiger triggered landmine explosion as they were engaged in preparations for the next phase of the offensive.

Although this war is very often described by both sides as a 'life and death struggle', it has turned out to be more about death than life. Only last month we had occasion to comment on the fact that since the latest war broke out in June 1990 over 1,500 service personnel had been killed and 6900 maimed for life and on the LTTE side over 2500 cadres had been killed and an undisclosed number injured. At least there are some in both camps whose function is to count their dead and injured, and list them as 'national heroes' or 'martyrs'. However, life has become so senselessly cheap in Sri Lanka that no one even takes the trouble to produce a count of the tens of thousands of uninvolved innocent and defenceless civilians who have paid the ultimate price with their lives in the course of this war.

Despite the claims by both sides of a victory here and a defeat there, the question that has to be asked is: What has the government or the LTTE achieved at the end of two years and two months of war besides the death and destruction that it has entailed? Even after raising defence expenditure to twenty thousand million rupees for the purpose of prosecuting this war, can the government claim that they have militarily subdued the Tigers to the point where it can impose its will? Can the Tigers legitimately claim that they have achieved by engaging in this war more power or territory than they possessed before June 1990 when they were negotiating with the government? If a balance sheet is to be drawn, both sides have exacted a heavy price upon each other, and they have jointly and severally exacted a heavier price from the people.

What has been manifestly clear to many from the time the war broke out and which is made more obvious from recent developments on the military front is that there is absolutely no basis for the belief that there is a military solution to the conflict.

The only way out, as repeated very often in these columns, is for all concerned parties to negotiate. It may be that the suspicion and mistrust between the parties and the complexities of the domestic political situation may stand in the way of resuming negotiations. Of late the United Nations has become active in the field of conflict resolution in many countries. It is high time the good offices of the UN Secretary General and even the intervention of the UN Security Council are sought with a view to seeking a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict and restoration of peace with guarantees for the protection of the democratic and human rights of all the people of the island.

Top Officers Killed as Army Takes a Heavy Blow

from Rita Sebastian in Colombo

For an already demoralised army having suffered over 150 dead in the last month alone, losing its two top rankers in the northern battlefront is a devastating blow. Both officers, Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa and Brigadier Vijeya Wimalaratne, key figures in the war drama that was being enacted daily on the northern front, died along with eight others, seven of them officers, in a Tiger pressure mine explosion in Kayts island, off the northern Jaffna mainland on August 7.

To the army and the country, the loss seems irreparable. Both men epitomised, for those in and outside the army, a courage and a selfless dedication to duty. The late General Kobbekaduwa was that kind of rare soldier who saw beyond gaining military victories in the field. He anguished over the tremendous hardships that the people in the northeast were being put to. An anguish that led to, wherever possible, a relaxation of the often repressive strictures that became the lot of the civilian population caught between the warring sides.

It was not guns and bullets that he saw finally winning the war, but a people won over from the side of militancy. He ran into trouble with the political leadership at the initial stages of Eelam war 2, for advocating a political solution to the crisis.

What now is the question that everybody is asking. Will the military re-think its future operations in the north. If answer was needed it came quick on the heels of the killing. Defence Secretary Cyril Ranatunge said in a special communique that the military would 'redouble its efforts to achieve its objective'. And that objective no doubt is to militarily marginalise the Tigers, get a political process off the ground, and return the northeast to peace and normalcy.

In the last several weeks the Tigers have shown increasing signs of wanting to exploit the vulnerability of the thinly stretched logistical lines of the Sri Lankan Security forces. They attacked two comparatively isolated army camps causing substantial losses. In the first instance they overran the listlessly guarded Kattupotha army camp killing, according to official figures, 46 soldiers and making away in the bargain with a considerable haul of ammunition and weapons. In the second attack 15 soldiers from the Pirappamaduwa army camp were killed outside the army's forward defence lines, coinciding with a simultaneous attack on the camp itself which the soldiers were said to have successfully repulsed.

This new trend in the offensive however is beginning to cause some anxiety. The security forces in isolated camps tend to be jittery and several soldiers, specially newer and raw recruits have been susceptible to an attack of nerves.

These reports of poor or sagging morale must be read in conjunction with another unwelcome development. There have been reports of a falling off, of applications to join the army. An opposition politician, speaking during the debate for the extension of the emergency in parliament, revealed that there were only 360 applications to fill 1000 vacancies in the Sri Lanka army. For a similar number of vacancies in the voluntary force, the MP alleged, that there were only 900 applications. This contrasts with the earlier enthusiastic, even exuberant response to calls to join the army.

Not long ago the newspapers pubished photographs of youth, specially from the impoverished south, queuing up to join the army and 'clobber' the Tigers. That mood engendered in part by a sort of war psychosis seems to have passed. The current mood seems to be sullen, the unmistakable signs of a war fatigue. But military sources dismiss such speculation. And going by reports, the next phase of operations to wrest Jaffna from Tiger control was to have begun in the second week of August. A battle strategy that is likely to be now put on hold until the two men who led operations in the north, the late General Kobbekaduwa and Brigadier V. Wimalaratne are replaced.

Sri Lanka Freedom Party MP, Kingsley Wickremaratne told parliament recently that the government had so far spent rupees 120 billion on a 'senseless and costly war in the northeast'. But tragically it is a war that neither the ruling party nor the main opposition SLFP is making any attempt to bring to an end by addressing the main problem.

Somewhat in desperation the army has taken an unprecedented step and declared its willingness to take back 4000 deserters. Such a step is unparalleled in the annals of most armies.

But the government seems to find that desperate situations require desperate remedies. But it has provoked the question whether the army can depend on some fickle deserters to fight the war with any success against the Tigers who are highly motivated and ruthless in their pursuit.

However there seems to be some thin consolation for the army that the Tigers are also facing a problem of low morale. There have been persistent reports recently of disgruntled ranks and perhaps even bloody factional infighting. But neither side on the verge of exhaustion seems to be capable of putting and end to the fratricidal madness. As a humanitarian aid worker commented: 'Unless sanity breaks out peace will be a distant dream'.

When the Parliamentary Select Committee deliberations wind up, Ceylon Workers Congress President, S. Thondaman will once again take on the role of mediator and journey north to dialogue with the Tigers. Whether he will succeed, where others failed to bring the Tigers back to the negotiating table is yet to be seen.

The Kayts incident which the Tigers have claimed responsibility for, and for which the military has its own theory of an old pressure mine having been activated by the weight of the 10 men in one vehicle, brings home more forcefully than ever that the continuing war can only inflict more casualties. Whether the mine was old or newly laid, the end result was the same. At least now, out of the nation's collective grief must emerge some positive thinking if we are to end the carnage.

Army Camp Wiped Out

At least 46 soldiers including officers were killed and 11 more injured when a heavily armed group of several hundred Tigers overran the army camp at Katupotha in the Anuradhapura district on 11 July. Before withdrawing the Tigers had set fire to the camp, armoured cars, a bulldozer and other items in the vicinity of the camp. The dead included Lieutenant Pethiyagoda and two non-commissioned officers. In subsequent press briefing, Colonel Sarath Moonesinghe conceded that after wiping out the camp, the Tigers had got away with 33,413 rounds of ammunition and over 108 weapons including 80 T-56 rifles, 9 SLR rifles, 2 T-81 rifles and 19 303 rifles, and also 116 mm mortars and two radio sets.

Northern Military Commanders Killed in Landmine Blast

The Commander of the entire northern region of Sri Lanka, Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa (52), Commander of Security Forces in the northern Jaffna Peninsula, Brigadier Wijaya Wimalaratne (52), and Commander of Naval Forces in the north, Commodore Mohan Jayamaha (33), were among Sri Lanka's ten senior military officers killed in a landmine explosion at Aralithurai in the Kayts Island situated to the west of Jaffna peninsula on 8 August.

Major General Kobbekaduwa was the highest ranking officer killed in the continuing battle with the Tamil Tigers who promptly claimed responsibility for causing the mine explosion. Brigadier Wimalaratne was the second Army Brigadier to be killed in the conflict. The first to be killed last year in another similar landmine explosion triggered off by the Tigers was Trincomalee Coordinating Officer Brigadier Lucky Wijeratne.

Among the other dead in the blast were several senior Army and Naval officers. Those identified were Colonels T.G.M. Ariyratne, H.R. Stephen, U.N. Palipahana and Major Nalin Alwis of the army, and two Naval Lieutenants, Lankatilleke and Wijepura.

While all the others died on the spot, Maj. Gen. Kobbekaduwa was seriously injured and was airlifted immediately following the explosion to Colombo General Hospital where he died after medical personnel had tried hard to save his life.

According to initial reports, when the incident occurred, the officers had been visiting Aralithurai in Kayts Island where the Navy maintains its northern headquarters and were returning together in a single military vehicle when it went over and activated a pressure mine which was lying buried undetected in the ground. The army regained control of the island of Kayts from the Tigers in a major military operation during the latter part of 1990 under the command of Brigadier Wimalaratne. Since then the island had been under the control of the combined forces of the Army and Navy and a pro-government Tamil group, Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) headed by Douglas Devananda.

The deaths of so many senior military officers has occurred at a time when the government was planning a renewed major offensive against the Tamil Tigers in the Jaffna peninsula. The higher echelons of the armed forces are not concealing the fact that the death of these senior officers constituted the biggest loss and major tragedy for the security forces and would have a shattering effect on the morale of the armed forces.

A former Commander of the Armed forces presently living abroad said that the deaths of such senior officers like Maj. Gen. Kobbekaduwa and Brigadier Wimalaratne would have a serious adverse impact on the command structures of the army and would seriously jeopardise the war effort against the Tigers particularly because these two officers were fully conversant with the geography and terrain of northern Sri Lanka and more specifically Jaffna.

Over 50,000 people, including political and religious leaders, attended the funeral that took place on 10 August at the Kanatte Cemetery in Colombo.

Some of those in the crowd resorted to slogan shouting and stone throwing directed at Government Party politicians at the cemetery, and it was reported a few persons were injured including acting State Minister for Defence, John Amaratunga and journalist Dayan Jayatilleke. There was a degree of fear and tension among the people particularly among Tamils living in and around Colombo and shops, offices and other business establishments put their shutters up very early in the afternoon and people were seen hurrying homebound.

Having fled the north and east due to the continuing war, there are more Tamils living in Colombo and the surrounding areas now than ever before. Among them and other concerned people there was a generalised sense of fear of a possible incitement to a repetition of July 1983 when thousands of Tamils were killed and their homes and properties put to the torch in an uncontrolled orgy of mob violence following a similar funeral at the same place of 13 soldiers who had been killed in a similar landmine explosion.

LTTE to Challenge Indian Ban

From S. Venkat Narayan

NEW DELHI, Aug. 7 – The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the separatist Tamil militant outfit of Sri Lanka allegedly involved in former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, is planning to challenge the Indian Government's notification for declaring it unlawful.

Informed sources here say that the LTTE's functionaries in the United States and Britain have communicated to the New Delhi-based Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal recently.

Apparently, the LTTE has launched a hunt for a suitable lawyer to defend itself before the Tribunal, which will decide whether the organisation should be declared unlawful or not.

The US-based Institute of World Affairs, which is said to be connected with the LTTE, is understood to have sent feelers to noted Indian criminal and constitutional lawyer Ram Jethmalani to find out if he is prepared to provide legal assistance to the LTTE.

Mr. Jethmalani, who had incidentally defended the Sikh assassins of Rajiv Gandhi's mother Indira Gandhi, was not available for comment. But it is known in legal circles here that he has conveyed to the LTTE that he will not be in a position to help it.

The LTTE needs to engage a lawyer in India because of the notices issued to it by an appropriate court on July 1 asking it to show cause 'in writing' why the militant group should not be declared unlawful under the Unawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967.

The notices were issued to the LTTE's headquarters at Jaffna in Sri Lanka's Northern Province, its London office, and to K.R. Sagar, one of its office-bearers in London.

Exactly one year after Rajiv Gandhi's brutal assassination at an election rally at Sriperumbudur near Madras in Tamil Nadu by an LTTE woman activist on May 21 last year, the Government of India issued a notification under section 3 of the UAPA, declaring the LTTE unlawful. It included LTTE members, activists, armed groups and its sympathisers working on the 'Indian soil.'

The notification issued on May 14 was referred to the Statutory authority seeking an adjudication whether or not 'there is sufficient cause for declaring the LTTE to be an unlawful association.' The court concerned with the matter has kept the entire records relating to the unlawful activities of the LTTE in a sealed cover. Under the UAPA, the government's decision to declare an organisation unlawful shall become final only after the court's judgement upholding the notification.

Late News: The London headquarters of the LTTE announced on 10 August that the Tamil Nadu politician Mr. P.

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Bombing Destroys Navajeevanam Centre

Navajeevanam Welfare & Rehabilitation Centre, situated in the village of Murasumoddai, Paranthan in the Kilinochchi District, Sri-Lanka, with a complement of 300 residents, experienced its share of traumatic experiences, since the escalation of atrocities, 10 years ago, in the Northern Province of the Island.

On Tuesday the 30th of June 1992, all the residents in Navajeevanam retired to bed, before the normal time – 9.00pm, as there was a curfew. At 9.15pm, a plane hovered over the compound and disappeared. After a short while, at 10.00pm, again a plane was over the premises and dropped a bomb, 5 feet away from the Office Building. The Office Building, with all its contents (viz: typewriters, Roneo machines, records, account books, furniture, stationery etc.) was totally destroyed.

The Mother House adjoining the Office was occupied at the time of the incident by the Director, his wife and mother. There was extensive damage to the building, and the Director, sustained minor injuries.

In addition, buildings at a distance from the Office, varying from 30' to 100' – the Church, Apprentice Hostel, Assembly Hall, Stores and Vehicle Garage, were similarly damaged. 200 bags of Paddy and 75 cwts of manure were completely destroyed. A motor car and scooter were damaged. Implements like water pumps, sprayers and tools etc., collected over the years were damaged beyond repair.

An evaluation of the damage shows that the cost of rebuilding, renovating and replacing damaged items would run into millions of Rupees. The Mother House is in such a state, that a slight vibration would bring the building down. Therefore, we will have to rebuild it, and also a new Office Block.

It is a pity that accounting books, ledgers, cash books, vouchers etc., relating to the current and past years, have been completely destroyed, so also archives preserved for posterity. These are not replaceable at any cost.

The Government Agent of the District with his Assistant and the Village Headman, visited the site on the 1st July and saw for themselves the damage caused. Representatives of Oxfam and the Red Cross too visited the site. To what extent help will be rendered by Government, is not assessable. Even if anything is possible, it will take a considerable time. In the meantime, it is incumbent on us, to restore the organisation, if not to its original glory, to the extent, at least, so that it could continue to serve the children, and those who visit us to reside as comfortably as possible.

The next day, the 1st July 1992 was Sister Elizabeth Baker's Fifth Death Anniversary. To commemorate the event, a Sports Meeting for the Nursery children was organised for that day. The prizes for the event were packed and kept in the Office. These too were burnt. The aftermath of the previous day's events did not deter Navajeevanam Fellowship and the residents from attending the Service of Thanksgiving, for Sister Baker's life and work, and also in Thanksgiving for our protection. The service was conducted by the Executive Secretary of the Fellowship, who read Psalm 91 and prayed that a new growth should begin from the ashes.

It is a well known fact that when incidents of this nature take place, there are a few deaths, many casualties, with severe injuries and pandemonium exists. At Navajeevanam, none of these happened, and the residents, mostly small children were all safe and they behaved in an exemplary manner. God acts in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform.

What else can we say, except, we 'Pray' and 'Hope' for our future, and that our friends and well-wishers will rise to the occasion, to render help bountifully.

T. Kirupanantharajah,
Director,

Navajeevanam Fellowship,
Paranthan, Sri-Lanka,
6th July 1992.

LTTE Asked to Show Cause on Ban

From S. Venkat Narayan

NEW DELHI, July 8 – The Government of the Southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu today issued notice to the banned Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) asking it to explain why the Indian Government's order declaring the organisation as unlawful should not be confirmed.

The notice stipulates that the LTTE's explanation should be forthcoming within the next 30 days.

The notice said that, as required under Section 4 (1) of the Unlawful Activities Act (Prevention), 1967, the Indian Government's May 14 order has been referred to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal for adjudicating whether there was sufficient case for such a declaration.

Mr. Justice PN Nag of the Delhi High Court constitutes the Tribunal. The notice further said that the LTTE's written explanation should be sent to the Registrar of the Tribunal, in Delhi.

The notice has been published as an advertisement in today's newspapers in Madras. It is addressed to the LTTE headquarters in the Jaffna University Campus in northern Sri Lanka, the LTTE's International Secretariat in London, and to K.R. Segar, an office-bearer of the LTTE in London.

The Indian Government has banned the LTTE through a notification on May 14 for its involvement in the brutal assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at an election meeting at Sriperumbudur near Madras on May 21 last year, and for trying to destabilize this country by helping local secessionist militant outfits in several states.

On May 20 this year, the LTTE was charged with the conspiracy and murder of Mr. Gandhi in a chargesheet filed by the special investigation team (SIT) of the Indian Government's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

LTTE's founder-leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and his intelligence chief Pottu Amman head the list of 41 people accused in the Gandhi assassination case. Twentysix Sri Lankan Tamils figure in the list, while the remaining 15 accused are Indians.

Of the 41, 12 have been listed as dead. The dead include Dhanu, the woman suicide-bomber, who had detonated an explosive device worn by her in a belt, killing herself, Mr. Gandhi, and 15 others on the spot.

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Nedumaran and the leader of the PPK (Patali Makkal Kadchi) Dr. Ramadas, have filed petitions before the Tribunal challenging the ban on the LTTE.

Sivasithamparam Recounts Murder of TULF Leaders

TULF President, M. Sivasithamparam asked the killers of Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran to tell the world their reason for slaying them.

'They have not told the world why they gunned down the two TULF stalwarts', Mr. Sivasithamparam told the third commemoration meeting held at the TULF Colombo office in Havelock Town recently.

He said the killers had told them they had been sent by the LTTE command to talk Tamil unity.

'They came as our guests. They called us friends. They ate the biscuits Mrs. Yogeswaran served them. They drank the tea she poured. They discussed Tamil unity. They got up to place their cups on the table. They put their hands into their pockets and pulled out their revolvers and shot at us', he said.

Mr. Sivasithamparam is the only surviving eyewitness to that killing which took place at the Buller's Road house where they lived. He was also shot at but survived.

He said the three killers who were shot and killed by Mr. Amirthalingam's two bodyguards and a Sinhala policeman on guard duty used weapons that could have blown up the house.

'It is because of the courage of the two guards and the policeman that the others who lived in that house are living today', he said.

'Why did they kill Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran?' he asked.

'Because they worked for the Tamils? Because they helped work out a solution to the Tamil problem? Because they wanted all Lankans to live in this country with dignity and honour?'

He said Amirthalingam had worked to eliminate discrimination against Tamils. He had also taken up the cause of the Tamils of Indian origin, of the Muslims and the oppressed sections of the Sinhalese.

LSSP Leader, Bernard Soysa said Shri Lanka should find a solution to the ethnic problem. 'These killings must stop'.

'Are we going to carry this barbarism into the 21st century?' he asked.

SLMC Leader, M.H.M. Ashraff said Muslims of the east and north had lived in amity with the Tamils for centuries. Mr. Amirthalingam had fought for the rights of the Muslims even when Muslim leaders were silent.

'On this death anniversary of Mr. Amirthalingam let us resolve to work out an amicable scheme to give the Muslims in the north and east their rights. The SLMC is talking with the Tamil parties about it. We should succeed. We should not permit the talks to fail', he said.

Hindu Religious Affairs State Minister P. Devaraj said the Tamils and the Muslims should not waste time discussing trivialities. They agreed on major points and should build on that he said.

Mr. T. Thangathurai, former MP for Mutur, proposed the vote of thanks.

Christian Council Urges Negotiated Settlement

The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka is dismayed and greatly distressed that parties to the conflict in our country have now apparently abandoned faith in the possibility of a political settlement and seem determined to seek a military victory. We see this as a setback to any permanent solution that may be possible. At this critical juncture we are especially concerned about the traumatic effect it has on innocent civilians. In the light of this the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka at its meeting of June 29 1992 decided to make an urgent appeal to the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. An appeal by the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka stated:

While once again strongly imploring the parties to the conflict to seek a process of meaningful negotiation for a political settlement, we appeal that the following be implemented to ease the dehumanising effects of this disastrous war.

We appeal to the LTTE to ensure that: they do not endanger civilians by retreating into (or by parking their vehicles nearby) kovils, temples, mosques, churches, hospitals, schools or other public buildings, and lift travel restrictions on people living in areas controlled by them (including residents of the island who wish to return to their homes).

We appeal to the government to ensure that: essential medicines be sent to the hospitals in the North, all indiscriminate shelling and bombing be halted immediately and at least one easily accessible exit/entry point from the peninsula be continuously kept open for unhindered civilian traffic and military action does not target any place of worship, hospitals, residential areas, schools and other public buildings, especially where the government has requested the population to take refuge, the release added.

Moreover, we earnestly appeal both to the government and the LTTE to state clearly the scope of its negotiating approach.

Displaced in Jaffna Swell to 350,000

The number of displaced persons in the Jaffna district had increased to nearly 350,000 from 70,000 families, Jaffna Government Agent, K. Manickawasagar said on 21 July.

He and Jaffna Regional Director of Education, R. Sundaralingam are now on an official visit to Colombo.

Mr. Manickawasagar said there was a severe shortage of kerosene, coconut oil and soap in Jaffna.

The GA said he held talks on 20 July with Additional Rehabilitation Commissioner, Charitha Ratwatte and informed him of the latest situation. Mr. Ratwatte had assured to take early steps to send 1000 barrels of kerosene and 200 barrels of coconut oil to Jaffna by ship.

The GA pointed out that this oil was extremely essential in Jaffna because there was no electricity there. As land transport through Kilinochchi had been blocked, Jaffna depended on ships, for all requirements.

The Director of Education is in Colombo to organise the holding of G.C.E. (A.L.) examination in Jaffna scheduled to start on August 1, the GA said.

The answer scripts and other stationery had already been sent. Question papers will be sent by air before July 26, he added.

He said he had submitted to the President's Secretary estimates of the damage to the temple in Tellippalai in May during a military operation, as instructed, he added.

DWC Supports N-E Merger

The Democratic Worker's Congress (DWC) while accepting the four-point solution submitted by the Tamil parties supports the merger and thereby creation of a single provincial administration in the merged North-Eastern Province. This will not only solve the ethnic question but also safeguard the unity of the country in the long

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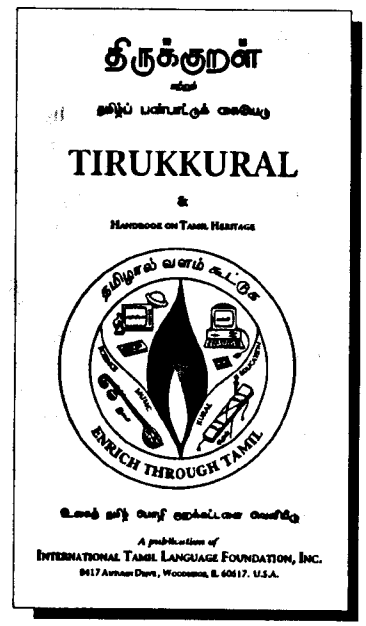
உலகத் தமிழ் மொழி அறக்கட்டளை

திருக்குறள் மொழிபெயர்ப்புத் திட்டம்
Tirukkural Translation Project

'தமிழால் வளம் கூட்டுக' என்ற குறிக்கோளுடன் 'உலகத்தமிழ்மொழி அறக்கட்டளை' எனும் நிறுவனத்தைத் தொடங்கியுள்ளோம். இதன் முதல் பணியாகத் தமிழ்மறையாம் திருக்குறளை இன்றைய ஆங்கிலத்தில் கவிதை மொழி–பெயர்ப்புச் செய்வித்து வெளியிடுவதை மேற்கொண்டுள்ளோம். இது தவிர, 'கர்னாடக இசை' என வழங்கும் தமிழ் மரபிசையை எளிய, பொதுத் தமிழ்ப் பாடல்களாக, குறுந் தகடுகளில் (காம்பேக்ட் டிஸ்க்) வெளியிட்டுப் பரப்ப 'தமிழ் இசை மறுமலர்ச்சித் திட்டம்', மற்றும் மேற்கு உலகின் அறிவியல் பாடங்களைத் தமிழில் ஒளி–ஒலி மொழி பெயர்த்து தமிழ்ப் பள்ளிகளுக்கு இலவசமாக வழங்கும் 'தத்து எடுப்போம் ஒரு பள்ளியை' எனும் திட்டமும் எங்கள் பணிமில் உண்டு.

இவை ஈடேற உங்கள் பொருள் உதவியும், பிற உதவியும் தேவை. இத்திட்டங்களை விளக்கியும், குறளிலிருந்து மூன்று அதிகாரங்களை முன்மாதிரியாக மொழிபெயர்ப்புச் செய்தும் 20 பக்க அளவில் அறிவிப்பு இதழை அச்சிட்டு உள்ளோம். உங்கள் முகவரியும், உங்களைப் போன்ற தமிழ் உணர்வு உள்ள உங்கள் நண்பர்கள் முகவரிகளையும் அனுப்பி வைக்க இயலுமா? உங்கள் கடிதம் கிடைத்ததும், எல்லோருக்கும் அறிவிப்பு இதழை அனுப்புவோம். நன்றி.



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தமிழால் வளம் கூட்டுக! **ENRICH THROUGH TAMIL**

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run, a press release by the DWC states.

The campaign by certain racist politicians for the delinking of the present North-Eastern Province and for re-demarcation of the East are out of partial understanding of the whole issue or due to political bankruptcy. These quarters say that provinces should not be carved on ethnic lines and frighten the whole nation by claiming that such an act will only lead to ultimate division of Sri Lanka.

But on the contrary, only a separate northern provincial administration may lead to the creation of Eelam due to its huge Tamil majority. A pan-Tamil northern province will only further fan racial polarisation in the country and end up in a situation similar to that of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. But on the other hand Tamil north merged with multi-ethnic east will be a multi-ethnic and multi-religious province. This multi-ethnicity will naturally reflect in the provincial assembly and cabinet and checkmate any ultra nationalist behaviour of the provincial administration, the release added.

All institutional arrangements for the safeguard of the rights of the minorities in the merged North-East can be sorted out in no time once this unit to devolution is finalised. If Tamil and Muslim 'minorities' in all other seven provinces can live peacefully it is only illogical to presume that 'minorities' in North-East cannot live in the same manner. However, this is possible only if an honourable peace is brought about in the merged North-East.

35 Soldiers and Policemen Killed in Tiger Attacks

LTTE cadres killed upto 35 soldiers and policemen in two sudden strikes in Trincomalee and Batticaloa on 29 July.

An estimated 40-strong Tiger force ambushed a route clearing patrol being conducted jointly by the Police and Army Special forces troops on the Polonnaruwa-Batticaloa Road between the villages of Navaladi and Meeyankulam at about 8.30am, security sources disclosed. A joint operations command communique said 26 policemen and Special Forces troops had been killed in this ambush when the Tigers had attacked with machine guns, small arms and rocket propelled grenades.

But later reports reaching Colombo said that upto 30 security personnel had been killed by the superior firepower of the Tigers before Army reinforcements reached the area. The fierce confrontation had lasted for more than half an hour, sources said. Six soldiers and two policemen were wounded.

In the early hours of July 29 morning a more than 100-strong LTTE force staged simultaneous attacks on two police posts in the two neighbouring hamlets of Sambalthivu and Athimotte in the Trincomalee district.

The Tigers launched their attacks on these two police posts, which are located within 800 metres apart, about 1.00am according to security sources. Four policemen and one home guard were killed in these attacks. Two policemen were wounded.

The Senior Superintendent of Police, Trincomalee, Chandra Perera has ordered a strong police contingent to this area. The army has also sent troop reinforcements for a search operation, sources said.

Tiger casualties in these confrontations were not known, sources said.

The two attacks came after the LTTE high command had urged their area leaders in the region to step up attacks to divert the military's attention from Jaffna.

Military sources said the security forces were 'thin on the ground' in the East because many troops had been redeployed for operations against the Tigers in the north.

Liberal Party on Merger of North-East

The Liberal Party was willing to support a combined North-Eastern Province provided adequate arrangements were made to ensure autonomous units for the Muslim and Sinhalese minorities within the province and to ensure that the rights of all individuals were adequately protected.

This was what the Liberal Party representatives told a delegation of six Tamil political parties who discussed the latter's four-point peace plan at the Liberal Party office on July 1 according to a statement issued by the Party.

The delegation consisted of representatives of the TULF, EPRLF, TELO, EDF, DPLF and ACTC.

The statement said: 'The Liberals informed the Tamil representatives that any new package of devolution should be implemented through the enactment of a new, federal constitution as the failure of the 13th amendment had made clear the difficulty of meaningfully devolving power under the current unitary constitution.

'The Liberals urged the Tamil parties to reflect on the need for a determined division of the power of state if devolution is to become a reality and urged them to advocate the strengthening of fundamental rights and the creation of a second chamber for this purpose'.

The statement said the Liberals also strongly deplored the racist and populist campaign against a reasonable settlement of the ethnic conflict based upon the notion that a combined North-East province was in no circumstances acceptable.

To achieve this objective, the Liberals urged the Tamil parties to arrive at a common position with the SLMC.

The statement said: 'Although the Liberal Party would prefer devolution to nine provinces including a multi-ethnic Eastern Province, the Liberal representatives told the Tamil delegation that they would support a combined North-East subject to the above conditions.

'Muslims Never Obstructed Tamil Struggle', – SLMC Leader

The Parliamentary Select Committee on the North-East issue met again on July 29 and 30 for another round of discussions to find a negotiated solution to the ethnic conflict.

A spokesman for one of the seven Tamil parties said he hoped they would soon reach an agreement with the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) on the merger issue.

Talks between the SLMC and the seven parties would resume in August after some TULF leaders at present in India return to Sri Lanka.

EPRLF senior member Loganathan Ketheeswaran is now in New Delhi. According to sources, he is expected to hold talks with central government officials.

Meanwhile the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) Leader, M.H.M. Ashraff recently assured a gathering of Muslims displaced from Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and

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Jaffna that his party would ensure their right to live peacefully in their original homes, in SLMC's talks with the seven Tamil political parties on the North-East issue.

The SLMC convened a seminar at the party office recently to discuss the issue of the future of Jaffna Muslims in sharing power in the North and the East.

Speaking to nearly 200 Muslim representatives from Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya, Mr. Ashraff said his party would never forget the plight of Muslims who were chased out by the LTTE from their traditional homes in the northern districts.

He said the Muslims in Jaffna had never obstructed the liberation struggle of the Tamil people. But, he said the LTTE mercilessly drove them out from Jaffna with only two-hour's notice after robbing them of all their valuables.

Mr. Ashraff said this shameful and cowardly act of the Tigers reversed the political liberation of the Tamil and Muslim people in the North and the East.

The SLMC Leader said weapons and political groups alone could not bring peace to the North and East. Harmony and goodwill among the different communities should be restored to ensure a meaningful and peaceful solution to the crisis.

He said although the Tamils and Muslims spoke the same language they belonged to two distinct communities and had the right to enjoy equal rights. On this basis, he said, the SLMC was striving to build up good relations between Tamils and Muslims in the East.

Several other SLMC officials also spoke at the meeting.

14 Army Men to be Court Martialled

Fourteen of the soldiers who allegedly took part in the Kokkadichcholai massacre of Tamil civilians are to be court martialled shortly a senior army officer has said.

He said investigations were nearing completion while the fourteen were being detained at the army camp in Ratnapura.

On July 13, last year, 67 civilians were killed allegedly by some members of the Army in retaliation for the killing of two soldiers in a land mine explosion at Batticaloa.

A commission headed by a judge was appointed to probe the massacre and its report was later presented to the Cabinet.

Among the commission's recommendations accepted by the Cabinet is the payment of Rs. 5.25 million as compensation to the families of the victims.

The Cabinet also decided to accept the recommendation on the desirability of taking action under military law. The commission made this recommendation because there was no evidence against any particular soldier or any kind of identification to enable prosecution before a civil court, informed sources said.

The Cabinet also accepted a third recommendation which requires military authorities to give clear instructions to soldiers not to indulge in or execute extra-military or non-military acts.

In all 17 army personnel were initially taken into custody in connection with this massacre.

Mrs. B: Opposition's Common Candidate for President

The six-party opposition alliance led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party has named Sirimavo Bandaranaike as its candidate for the next presidential election, when it is held.

Despite President Ranasinghe Premadasa's declaration that he will not call for presidential elections until his term ends in December 1994, the opposition is preparing to face a possible snap election.

Most of the opposition parties, including the powerful SLFP, have agreed in principal on the need for unity to insure victory in the next election. However, the alliance's decision will not insure the support of the entire opposition for Bandaranaike.

Major Parties

Apart from the SLFP, with its 67 seats, the only other opposition party represented in Parliament is the MEP, with 3 seats in the 225-member house.

Other major parties, including the new DUNF, a breakaway group of the ruling United National Party and the Tamil and Muslim parties, have not made up their mind on the opposition candidate.

The alliance has also decided to launch country-wide campaigns, including protest movements, to highlight the faults of the government. Although it is attempting to strengthen unity, most analysts believe that its unity could break any moment because of the leadership issue.

The only person who commands respect among the various opposition parties is Bandaranaike, 77, a former Prime Minister. But ill health could prevent her from running.

In that eventuality, her son Anura would likely be the SLFP choice. However, many in the party, including his sister Chandrika Kumaranatunge, are reported not in accord with him.

Senior DUNF leaders like former ministers Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake are said to be also reluctant to accept Anura, 43, as the common candidate. Thus, the opposition might invite an outsider like the Sarvodaya leader, A.T. Ariyaratne, to run. But it is doubtful that all the opposition groups would agree to his candidacy.

The SLFP leadership is also not likely to allow its organizational structure to be used for the benefit of a non-SLFP candidate. Some see this as an advantage to Premadasa, who has already announced that he will seek a second term.

Premadasa, who was elected for a six-year term in December 1989, has nearly three years more unless the verdict on the election goes against him. Even if he is unseated by the Supreme Court, the UNP is likely to renominate him.

Disappearance of 31 Students

Arrest of 7 Army Men and School Head Imminent

A senior military officer, six soldiers and a school principal are to be taken into custody in connection with the disappearance of 31 schoolboys from Embilipitiya during the height of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) terrorist activities.

They are to be taken in following several months of painstaking investigations carried out by two special teams of officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on the orders of President Ranasinghe Premadasa. The investigations were carried out over the past few months by the teams of special officers, who had fanned out into severl areas in a hunt for those responsible for the disappearances.

The disappearances of the boys aged between 17-20 years, during the period between August 1989 to January 1990, led to much criticism of the Government and the subject was raised twice in Parliament as well as among interna-

tional human rights groups.

The CID detectives who moved out into the villages of the Embilipitiya area had subsequently carried out extensive investigations in the Moneragala, Matara, Kuruwita, Balangoda and Ratnapura areas and had questioned teachers, students, farmers and Bhikkhus and other religious dignitaries among others.

The disappearances which followed the abductions of the students by men in camouflaged uniforms were reported to have taken place over the opposition of the students to a love affair between a girl and a relative of a school teacher.

Several students and military personnel who reportedly saw the abducted students in a military camp in the Embilipitiya area, too, had been questioned by the CID sleuths.

Govt. Measures Serve Only a Cosmetic Purpose – Asia Watch

A leading rights organization says reforms to prevent abuses by security forces in Sri Lanka had yet to show results.

Even today, with the new agencies in place ostensibly to act against government offences, Asia Watch said it found Sri Lankan citizens 'still face serious difficulties in attempting to protest against human rights violations by the state.'

In a report released recently entitled 'Human Rights Accountability in Sri Lanka,' Asia Watch said it welcomed intiatives taken by Colombo following the Sri Lanka aid Consortium meeting of October 1990, to protect human rights. But it said 'the real test would be when victims of human rights abuse could make complaints against the security forces without fear of retribution.'

Asia Watch has issued reports on Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, China and other countries in the region. It occasionally gives testimony in Congress, briefs interested Congressional staff people, and critiques the State Department's annual human rights report.

The 78-page report looks at the many agencies that were established by Colombo to address international criticism of its rights record, and to assure the U.S. that it is trying to prevent violations by security forces.

These new initiatives came after 10 years of violence in which militants and the government have been involved in killings, Asia Watch said.

'Successive governments in Sri Lanka, adopting the tactics of their armed opponents, purged suspected sympathizers of the various guerrilla groups,' it said, and were involved in disappearances of individuals and extrajudicial executions.

'As the war with Tamil militants in the northeast drags on, and the fear of a resurgence of militant activity in the south haunts officials,' it said, 'it has become clear that the Government's strategy only made things worse'.

'Even if individuals overcome the logistical difficulties of filing complaints about government violations, those who lodge petitions with the Supreme Court or lawyers acting on their behalf can face harassment, intimidation or even death.'

The chances of any members of the security forces actually being convicted as a result of complaints are dim, Asia Watch says, and even in the rare cases where any are found guilty, their sentences are often not enforced.

The report is based on information collected during the organization's mission to Sri Lanka last December. It said 'indiscriminate bombing in Jaffna peninsula' continued in that month, according to a journalist source.

Since June 1990, the report said, army planes and helicopters 'have done untold damage' through bombing and strafing Jaffna in 1990 and 1991.

Even as it accused militants of massacring hundreds of Muslim civilians and others, Asia Watch zeroed in on 'many of the tens of thousands of disappearances reported in recent years' following 'roundups of large numbers of people suspected of links to militant groups.'

And while young men were the primary targets of these operations, it said, women, children and elderly men have also been reported among the missing.

'In some cases, hundreds of people at a time have been taken by security forces; many subsequently disappear.'

After the aid consortium of Western donors met in October 1990, and after added U.S. pressure, when Congress moved to the foreign aid bill for fiscal year 1992-93, Colombo set up a special task force on human rights.

In addition, the All-Party Congress is completing a proposal to establish a national human rights commission with wide jurisdiction to document, monitor and protect human rights.

The task force has 'little to show in terms of concrete results' as of May 1992, Asia Watch says in its report. It made similar criticism of other government agencies, though it commended the government for setting them up.

The problem of accountability is aggravated by the plethora of units within the police force, Asia Watch says. People are moved from one police station to another without records being kept and without any clear responsibility being fixed for the safety of detainees, it says citing examples.

'It is not enough to point to an impressive array of laws and institutional mechanisms adopted to protect and promote human rights,' the organization said. Unless these laws and mechanisms are effectively implemented, 'the introduction of such measures will serve only a cosmetic purpose,' it declared.

Thugs Attack Journalists

Local and foreign journalists, who covered the launching of the DUNF's campaign to collect a million signatures against the government, were severely assaulted by thugs near Fort station recently in what DUNF leader Lalith Athulathmudali charged was a blatant attack on the freedom of the press.

The thugs, armed with knives and pistols attacked Lankadeepa photographers Lalith Weliwitigala, Harry Dikkumbura, Reuter photographer Anuruddha Lokuhapuarachchi, Waruna Kularatne of the Viz News, Rawaya reporter Sudath Malaveera and Divaina photographer Sri Lal Gomes after grabbing their cameras and notes.

Addressing a hurriedly called news conference after the attack, DUNF leader Lalith Athulathmudali said, a group of about 15 thugs had disrupted the peaceful protest campaign, attacked the journalists and damaged their cameras. A crowd of about 1000 was present when this incident took place. Following the attack by the thugs more people signed the petition, Lalith Athulathmudali told newsmen.

Mr. Athulathmudali charged, the attack on journalists was an attack on the freedom of the press and an attack on democracy in Sri Lanka.

The Secretary of the Working Journalists' Association, Ariyananda Dombagahawatta condemned the attack on journalists and vowed joint action to protest against such incidents.

The Ethnic Conflict

Options for a Settlement

– Shanthi –

While the war between government forces and the LTTE is continuing, the main question that has focused the attention of many concerning any eventual resolution of the ethnic conflict is whether the northern and eastern provinces should be merged into a single territorial unit to constitute a single Provincial Council.

In the course of the discussion of this topic, what is often forgotten is that at present the two provinces have already been legally merged and remains a single territorial unit.

Whatever view one may hold about the surrounding circumstances in which the much maligned Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 was entered into, despite its inherent flaws and inadequacies, no one can deny the Agreement's historic significance. At a time when the major political parties representing the Sinhalese people and the politically influential Buddhist clergy were not prepared even to think beyond district councils as a basic unit of devolution, the Agreement enabled the birth of the Provincial Council system of autonomy, and there appears to be little doubt that the essential provisions of the Agreement and the consequential 13th amendment to the island's constitution that gave legislative force to the establishment of Provincial Councils would remain the bedrock upon which future solution will be built, whether with improvements or not.

Opportunity Lost

The opportunity offered for a rational solution following the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement was unfortunately not taken up. If the LTTE's confrontation with the IPKF had not commenced and had not the LTTE stood in the way of implementing the Provincial Council system, it would have been in operation for five years by now and one would have been able to judge as to what extent it was able to meet the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people and solve the ethnic problem. Besides, the question whether the North-East should remain merged or not would have been settled, and it would no longer have been a contentious issue as it has now turned out to be. More importantly, the loss of tens of thousands of lives, the displacement of over a million people and the destruction and devastation in the North-East during the IPKF-LTTE confrontation and the subsequent full-scale war that broke out in June 1990 between the LTTE and Sri Lankan government forces could have been avoided.

The attempt to implement the Provincial Council system in the North-East in the teeth of the armed opposition of the LTTE proved a total failure. The elected North-East Provincial Council administration collapsed with the departure of the IPKF. However, because the President did not have the legal power to dissolve the Provincial Council, theoretically the elected administration was deemed to continue to exist. The LTTE which was then in negotiation with the Premadasa government insisted that the Council be dissolved, and for this purpose a further amendment to the then existing law was enacted empowering the President to dissolve the elected Council which he subsequently did. Upon dissolution, the administration of the North-East Provincial Council was vested in the Governor (General Nalin Seneviratne) who continues to function to this day.

The Right Question

It will therefore be seen that the right question now is not whether the northern and eastern provinces should be merged, but whether the legally established and presently existing North-East Province should be demerged/delinked or not. The procedure in law for the demerger/delinking of the North and Eastern Provinces is through a referendum in these areas, and until it is held, the status quo cannot be changed.

However, the war that broke out in June 1990 between the government and the LTTE and has been continuing to this day and what has transpired since then would appear to have given the opportunity and cause to question the very idea of a merged North-East Provincial Council. The all-party Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) which has been entrusted with the task of finding ways and means of solving the ethnic conflict is at present grappling with this very question.

Composed as it is with Members of Parliament belonging to various political parties with different stances on this question, so far there appears to be little prospect for a consensus within the PSC for a solution based on a merged North-East Provincial Council.

While promising to implement any consensus emerging from the PSC, President Premadasa has recently drawn attention to his party's (United National Party – UNP) election manifesto which was not in favour of a merged North-East Province. Having initially given the green light to Thondaman's peace proposals which favoured merger, the President has of late also adopted a rather ambivalent position.

Opposition Stance

The Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) is opposed to the merger, and so are the other small Sinhala-based parties. Of recent origin is a group called 'Helaurumaya' within the SLFP representing extremist Sinhala chauvinist views which is seeking to intimidate the SLFP leadership into adopting its own views. As far as the LSSP, CP and NSSP are concerned, they would support any reasonable solution with or without merger so long as they are acceptable to the Tamil parties.

The Tamil political parties represented in parliament, other non-LTTE Tamil militant groups and Thondaman's Ceylon Workers Congress regard the merger of the North-East as a fundamental pre-requisite for a resolution of the problem. Opinion among those representing the Muslims seem to be divided – while some have expressed strong opposition to the merger, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress which has considerable influence among the Tamil-speaking Muslims in the eastern province continues to favour a merged North-East Province within which they seek constitutional arrangements for an autonomous Muslim Council encompassing areas where they form a majority.

Tamil-Muslim Relations

In addition to the varying positions among political parties on the question of merger of the North-East, perhaps the most important issue that has cropped up since June 1990 is the relationship between the Tamil and Muslim communities. The concept of the 'Tamil-speaking people' (encompassing the Tamils and Muslims who spoke the same language) was basic to the demand of the North-East being the 'traditional homeland of the Tamil-speaking people' and the consequential justification for a merged autonomous North-East territorial unit.

When the merged North-East Provincial Council was established following the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, the vast majority of Muslim people particularly in the North-East welcomed and supported it. So much so, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress participated in the Provincial Council election held in November 1989 and became the second largest party in the then newly constituted Council in the North-East.

However, the happenings since the June 1990 war have seriously and almost irredeemably damaged the relations between the Tamil and Muslim communities. The attacks upon Muslim civilians including a series of brutal massacres in mosques in the east, in purported retaliation to alleged collaboration by some individual Muslims with government forces, the attacks upon and massacre of innumerable Tamil civilians by so-called Muslim homeguards, armed, trained, aided and abetted by the security forces, the cruel and forcible driving out by the LTTE of tens of thousands of ordinary defenceless Muslim families from Jaffna, Mannar and other northern areas, and the sectarian killings and counter-killings that still continue in the east have brought about a situation in which the once tenable, albeit tenuous, concept of a 'Tamil speaking people' encompassing the Tamil and Muslim communities is no longer sustainable.

The Options

It is against this tragic and divisive backdrop that any solution to the question of autonomy for the people of the North-East which is co-terminus with the resolution of the national question has to be considered. In this consideration, if one were to take into account the relationship of forces internally, regionally or internationally, the demand for a separate state as advanced by the LTTE is to be ruled out as that is not a route to a solution in the present context or in the foreseeable future, but a sure guarantee for an interminable and intractable war of self-destruction.

The LTTE has repeatedly called for direct negotiations with the government, and if at any time the government responds positively, it must be realised that the talks certainly would not be about drawing up the boundary lines between Sri Lanka and the separate state of Eelam. They will have to be about autonomy or devolution of powers and about remedial measures for the redress of other grievances and the arrangements about achieving them. Unless the LTTE's position is that their demand for a separate state is non-negotiable, in which case their calls for talks with the government would seem meaningless, sooner or later, the LTTE will of necessity have to present their preferred options for a settlement either on their own volition or in response to what the government puts forward.

There are two options that are presently on the table for discussion by the Parliamentary Select Committee. Firstly, the one placed by seven Tamil political parties and the CWC which seeks a settlement on the basis of the following four points:

1. Permanent merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces;
2. Meaningful devolution that signifies autonomy;
3. Institutional arrangements to safeguard the rights of the Muslims in the North and East; and
4. Necessary arrangements to ensure that the Sinhala minority in the North and East enjoy the same rights as the minorities in the Sinhala majority provinces.

The second option presented for discussion by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee, presumably with the concurrence of President Premadasa provides for:

1. Two elected separate Provincial Councils for the North and East; the administration of all matters pertaining to the Northern and Eastern Provinces would be attended to by the respective Councils.
2. An Apex Assembly to be elected at a joint meeting of the elected members of the Northern and Eastern Provincial Council; the Apex Assembly would plan common policies and coordinate programmes relevant to the two Councils.
3. More meaningful powers to be devolved to the Provincial Councils and the Apex Assembly, and rectification of all grievances presented by the communities.
4. A National Chamber to be constituted consisting of Chief Ministers to meet monthly with the President, Cabinet Ministers and representatives of opposition parties in parliament; the main function of the Chamber would be to establish harmony and coordination between the Centre and the Peripheral Units.
5. Until the elected Councils duly come into being, an Interim Administration for the Northern and Eastern Provinces is to be established with representatives of political parties within and outside Parliament.

Main Difference

The main difference between the two options is that the first one envisages a merged North-East Provincial Council under which institutional arrangements, meaning separate sub-councils, are made to safeguard the rights of the Muslim people, whereas the second option does not provide for a straightforward merger, but seeks to achieve the same objective in a practical way through an Apex Assembly. The balance of population mix – 43 percent Tamils, 33 percent Muslims and 21 percent Sinhalese – in the Eastern Province is such that no single community can seek to dominate the other, and therefore the second option does not see the need for separate arrangements to safeguard the rights of Muslims.

The advantage some see in the second option in comparison to the first one is that, while it may also placate those elements who are totally against the merger of the two provinces, at the same time it will prevent the 'Balkanisation' of the eastern province into small territorial ethnic enclaves which will be the case if Muslim majority areas, which are not physically contiguous with each other, are constituted into Muslim Councils, a development some fear may produce a recipe for institutionalising communal tensions in the long term.

Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the two options, what is important is that serious discussions must take place among all concerned parties, including the LTTE, without delay if the continuing blood-letting, death and devastation are to be brought to an end.

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Fourth Kanthasamy Memorial Lecture

The Role of the Media in a Multi-Ethnic Society

(Continued from last issue).

Today, I shall limit my observations to the national press, which should reflect the social and political climate of the country. If one surveys this medium, one would recognize the framework that defines its journalism. Often, whatever appears will indicate the news value of the paper. Further, in the presentation of information, a newspaper reveals its biases the way stories are organized on the pages. A similar trend may be detected when analysing the entire content of a publication, for which one should identify the regular sources of news, the group that the news benefits, the events that are covered regularly, the direction that the information flows, and the subjects frequently covered.

The language used by reporters in their coverage of events is relevant, too; newspapers can be classified accordingly. Those that choose sensationalism in their headlines and in the exposition of the story place a higher premium on the emotional content of the event than the actual facts. Such reporting is considered tabloid journalism. On the other hand, there are newspapers of record, which take on the role of instant historians, attempting to collect and present facts seriously. And when comparing the two, the latter is more credible.

Unfortunately, the Sri Lankan press does not have this distinction clearly demarcated. And what the public reads in the mainstream press is an amalgam of the two styles. Here are examples of a national newspaper choosing emotive language in its editorial. The two quotes are taken from an English publication:

a) '(The Country's) freedom has been sanctified by the blood of some of the brave security forces and the peace-loving law-abiding citizens who have been murdered by the treacherous attack of the terrorists.'

b) 'There is not the slightest doubt that all patriotic, law-abiding citizens, and they are by far the largest majority in the country, will be solidly behind the government now engaged in putting down terrorism and violence that a minority has unleashed upon the country.'

Both opinions have no bearing on the Tamil militancy. They appeared in the *Times of Ceylon* on the first page on April 6th and 7th, 1971. That this paper was aligning itself with the status quo against the JVP-led insurgency is clearly evident by the abuse it heaps on the insurgents. The choice of language identifies one group as bad, evil, while the other group, in this case the State and its representatives, as good. This Manichean obsession to cover domestic political disturbances was replicated when the Tamil militancy emerged.

To elaborate, let me cite from a report by the Council For Communal Harmony Through The Media. This organization studied the coverage of events in all three language newspapers around the time of the August 1981 communal violence. Here is what it said in its concluding comments of the Sinhala language press, which included the *Dinamina, Silumina, Davasa, Rivirasa, Lankadeepa,* and *Sri Lankadeepa:*

> 'It is well known that each paper has an opinion of its own, which determines the content of its editorials, news selection, etc. But when these opinions become extremely rigid, it inhibits the function of communicating accurate information. It is a situation of this nature that we have observed in the Sinhala dailies. . .in their reporting of news related to the Sinhala-Tamil issue. In their opinion, there is no basis for Tamil grievances. . . .What is communicated rather is anti-TULF, anti-Tamil propaganda. . . .When the June violence was discussed in Parliament, it was reported in such a way to keep the vital information out, and give the impression that the TULF was responsible. . . .Sometimes for the same purpose of pushing their own opinion, the newspapers even delete sections from the statements of the Head of the State. . . .In early June they attempted to keep the Sinhala public ignorant of what really happened in Jaffna from May 31st to June 3rd.'

A few years after the 1958 riots, Martin Wickramasinghe, the doyen of Sri Lankan literature, wrote an essay, titled 'Our Cultural Problems and Anthropology', where he argued that 'Politics encourages us to exploit differences.' He went on to add, 'In many countries there are peoples of different races and communities speaking languages unintelligible to each other and following divergent religions. One of the difficult tasks of the modern world is to get these people to live in unity in spite of the seeming irreconcilable differences. . . .I find it difficult to persuade myself to believe that the two major communities of Ceylon are influenced by racial and religious prejudice.'

Mr. Wickramasinghe's observation provides me with an illustration of the dual level that multi-ethnicity needs to be perceived. When one refers to Sri Lanka as a multi-ethnic society, it is prudent to qualify such a classification according to the social and political realities.

The social dimension stems out of the human act of associating with fellow humans in various capacities, rather than living in isolation. Invariably, such an association generates a bond, a sense of community, a common culture. Within the geographic entity of Sri Lanka, one can identify, at the social level, a variety of cultures and communities: linguistic, religious, economic, etc.

In such a heterogeneous social climate, the political ideology that guides the government has to be accommodative. It requires a balancing act between the divisive nature of politics and the cohesive chord at the social level. And the triumph of statecraft would be to create a political model that will be appropriate for a multi-ethnic society. Unfortunately, the three models that have tried to establish a political identity for Sri Lanka have not been internalized by all the peoples of this land. In this case, I am referring to the Soulbury Constitution, the First Republican Constitution and the Second Republican Constitution.

From the offerings in the press, there is ample evidence that the ethnic issue is reported within a political confine. No doubt, there is some validity to such accounts. But it is one-dimensional. It would be in the interest of the public, I feel, if coverage is expanded to report about ethnic groups at the social level and at the existential level. Besides adding another dimension, such breadth will reveal common human problems that transcend all groups.

An example that comes to mind is the refugee crisis. Today, we have over a million men, women, and children in refugee camps. This traumatic condition is not limited to one ethnic group.

As I see it, there is a human interest story in each victim of social dislocation, which would bring out the poignancy about this large multi-ethnic group. Somehow, journalists do not cover this shared plight. If they do, reporters may also discover what a writer in an issue of *Pravda* disclosed: the refugees serve as a potential group for reconciliation and peace.

Presently, I have time only to dwell on political reporting in the national press. What about its quality? Unfortunately, it is abysmal, since sloganeering and propaganda are pervasive. The fault is two-fold. There is the government's responsibility. However much the regime, and such political columnists like Lanka Putra and Anurudha Tilakasiri, argue that there is an environment of freedom for journalists to work, there is among reporters, particularly those writing politics, a sense of fear. This condition leads to a 'chilling' effect, minimizing the extent of coverage.

But for reporters to vilify the government for the sorry condition of political journalism is unconscionable. I have already disclosed the social responsibility that Article 19 places on the media. A more serious problem is the prevailing method to report politics. It has become an exercise in dictation.

Presently, the ubiquitous political speech made at public rallies is the predominant form through which the press reports ethnic issues. This approach makes the reporter appear more like a glorified stenographer. What is required, instead, is an effort by the journalist who covers a speech to locate a story based on the issues articulated. Reporters need to make their own decisions on what is newsworthy in the text of the address. Such a choice may be guided by the novelty of what was said, the prominence of the person saying it, its relevancy to the prevailing political climate, and the contradictions, if any, between the words and deeds of the speaker or between the words and reality.

In addition, the journalist is in a position to challenge or assess the central theme of the speech by seeking reactions from people who hold opposing points of view. By eliciting many points of view on a particular subject, the reporter would have broadened the story.

Simply to offer the pages of a newspaper for the text of a political speech to be reproduced will result in abuse. There are ample examples of this 'free advertising' within the realms of ethnic issues. Now and again, we read speeches made by a few exhibitionists of hate and malice. At such times, I always wonder why the journalist, who meticulously took down the speech, forfeited his ability of critical thinking by not asking the speaker how much was fact and how much was fiction. In this situation, the reporter is at the frontier of information. And it is he or she who decides the content and the form the news will take as it transcends from a limited forum to a mass audience.

Further, reports on ethnicity emerge out of debates in Parliament. Members of the House enjoy the power to raise or lower the stakes of this subject on the nation's political agenda. Just as much as Parliament provides the structure to discuss the problem freely, the press needs to offer space for the public to reflect on the opinions of legislators. Such a continuous discourse will serve as essential feedback information for Parliamentarians. This nexus could be strengthened by reporters pursuing follow-up stories from among the people or groups that will be impacted by impending legislature. And rather than limiting this avenue to people in Colombo, it is paramount to canvass opinion from citizens who live beyond the capital. It would make the dialogue on issues a more representative sample of national opinion.

Besides political speeches, press notices and press conferences feed political journalism. Whatever the form, we cannot ignore the innumerable instances where ethnic politics has been reported to exploit emotions. In such cases, the press is as guilty as the spokesmen who launch campaigns with sectarian interest. Jingoism of this sort distorts the commitment to balanced and accurate coverage expected of the press. It produces hate, suspicion, and distrust in the mind of the readers against the group being scapegoated.

There is a danger when the mainstream press campaigns for causes that have a narrow nationalist focus, rather than campaign for broad, humanitarian principles. It denies the truth to its readers in the interest of propagating a particular ideology. All too often, journalists who are swept up by such efforts are blinded from the greater issues at stake, and proverbial wisdom warns us of the danger when the blind lead the blind.

Let us look at the Emergency Law as a case in point. When it was introduced to strengthen the force of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the North, it was deemed an appropriate measure by the press in the South. Before long, however, these harsh laws impacted the people in the whole country, during the second JVP uprising in 1987. By then, it was too late for sections of the press to fault the State with excessive power, since the media opinion in the South had nurtured and endorsed the growth of a strong national security State. It is ironic that the ferocity of the PTA and the Emergency Law did not discriminate between ethnic groups.

So far, I have dwelt on the avenue that journalists proceed to gather political information. There is a convenience about the existing arrangement, since journalists depend heavily on sources involved in the formal political process, whether in or out of power. However, there is a vast area that remains neglected: perceptions at the community level. An important step towards the sophistication of political reporting would be for the press to explore the attitude on the ethnic question from men and women in the street, in villages, in towns, and in institutions that are not directly affiliated with the decision-making process. These opinions are necessary components if the media is committed to understanding the political culture it serves.

Since Sri Lanka does not have the luxury of opinion polls, the press, through human interest stories, could fill the void by writing about the common beliefs and the modes of thinking on the ethnic question. It would provide a channel for grass roots opinion to contribute towards shaping the political agenda.

In addition to those who report the ethnic problem through news and feature stories, another coterie of writers who provide information are the columnists. Here, I refer to those who contribute personal columns using their name or a pseudonym. Unlike the objectivity required from the political reporter, the political columnist enjoys a wider latitude, since his or her effort is subjective. Such a classification, however, does not mean that a writer should indulge in an orgy of mudslinging, but be guided by the epithet 'facts are sacred; comment is free.'

Using the Sunday newspapers as a guide, we would be able to locate these writers as staff members or as guest writers. It is natural that each writer reveals his biases as he argues or analyses his subject. Better still, a reader will be able to extract the perceptions of a political group, if it is the case, a writer represents. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the editor to solicit opposing points of view from a staff columnist or a guest writer. This is to prevent a newspaper

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

from becoming a platform for propaganda. Further, it would be in keeping with the liberal spirit of Article 19.

So far, I have identified the existing ways by which the press informs its readers: an objective news report, a human interest story, a feature story, a news analysis, or an opinion. This framework evolved with the advance of journalism. In democracies, such a convention is important, since it supplies a diversity of ways that incidents, events, and issues may be viewed. If members of the press are sincere to their profession, then they will defend the ideas that produced this concept to disseminate information, for the principal beneficiary is neither the reporter nor the publisher, but the reader, the invididual citizen.

By now, it would be obvious to you that I concentrated significantly on the press. I did so because it is the medium I know best. Moreover, I feel satisfied with my decision since it was the medium that Mr. Kanthasamy chose, too. Further, despite the state imposed restraints on this medium, there is a fair amount of proof that the press enjoys more space to function than television and radio. Therefore, a more representative, and natural, picture is manifest when scrutinizing the functional role of this medium in our multi-ethnic society.

But there is a point to be made about the other two media. The most important feature is that they are heavily controlled by the State. Nevertheless, this arrangement provides us with an indication of how the Government perceives the multi-ethnic structure of Sri Lanka. If we look at the broadcasting medium, the one with the largest public audience, it reveals that the State has provided the space for each language community to have access to radio. The television station has gone a step further than the monolingual broadcast stations. It has accommodated all three language groups in one medium, indicating it as a medium that tolerates cultural pluralism. As it appears, these government controlled media reflect the tri-lingual composite of the country.

Some people might find comfort in this integration process. However, since freedom is non-existent in either medium, this cosy arrangement is not natural; rather, an imposed process. And the content of programmes and news indicates the absurdity of this exercise. Therefore, we need to question such an artificial effort, which suffers from a paucity of communication. The programmes deny the listening and viewing public a cross-section of information on perceptions and misperceptions within an ethnic group and between ethnic groups. Whether in the form of news reports, features, panel discussions, and interviews, the audience should be told about the warts of the country. The powdered face, cosmetic approach that seems to satisfy the objectives of the present management hides the agonizing truth. And if the government is sincere about upholding the principles of democracy in a multi-ethnic society, it should defend a cardinal requirement as a prerequisite: an informed citizenry. This can only be achieved when the television station and radio station serve as fora for many ideas and many truths.

During this lecture, ladies and gentlemen, I have shown you how frequently the media violates its obligation to provide diverse information. In a multi-ethnic society, this failure can be devastating, as indicated by the prevailing political climate. There is no alternative to this citizen's right.

A commitment to openness by the media will require the individual journalist to challenge the prevailing conventions. Out of this will emerge, I hope, an enlightened media and a more informed national constituency, where the people will relate to each other as human beings first, then Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers.

The importance of the media, as an institution, within a multi-ethnic society cannot be minimized. Its strength is in its structure to link the many peoples in this country. In this realm, too, the media is wanting. It needs to redefine its role, projecting a cosmopolitan image, for it has the capacity to generate a multi-ethnic community through communication.

ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE

Duty-Conscious & Faithful

Dear Editor,

I write to publicly congratulate *TT*, for having survived the past ten turbulent years, still parading proudly through modern times in the hearts and minds of its mass readership with chest forward and head held high aiming primarily to promote the cause of Eelam Tamils. I earnestly wish *TT* many more years of fruitful service.

Being conscious of the fact that no one is perfect I consider *TT's* journalistic merits to be of the highest possible quality of which Tamils everywhere could and should be justly proud. Besides having been an uninterrupted subscriber from its inception I have also contributed articles, most of which have been published. The one or two which were kept out for reasons with which I do not yet agree I attribute to misunderstanding (which is easy with poetry) rather than to editorial arrogance or bloody-mindedness. You and your dedicated associates have on occasions sought my advice, opinions and assistance, and I believe I have also served the Tamil cause through your paper in a duty-conscious and faithful manner.

Viewing objectively, I am convinced *TT* is usually unbiased though on a very few occasions I discerned signs of unfair support for some allegations against those spearheading the Tamil liberation movement. Of course, *TT's* (Voltaire's) Motto: I DO NOT AGREE WITH A WORD OF WHAT YOU SAY, BUT I WILL DEFEND TO THE DEATH YOUR RIGHT TO SAY IT, applies only to things being **said**, and not to things being **done.** While the above motto is perfect as a journalistic philosophy, it is inadequate in the context of the life-and-death struggle of the Eelam Tamils which is the **raison d'etre** for *TT's* birth and existence. As a well-wisher I say that if only you remember this single fact, *TT* will soon begin to sooth the embittered hearts of some of its most influential readers, and also play a full role towards solving Eelam Tamils' problems expeditiously and in a just and lasting manner.

If I were, on the other side of the coin, to list and amplify the many merits of *TT*, which I feel could be even raising professional jealousies in certain quarters, I will be making this piece too long that you may wish to edit it down – which I do not like to happen. Hence I conclude by saying that I honestly believe *TT* to be journalistically the best periodical that has been published for the Tamils in Britain, and that I will keep on subscribing to it as long as it exists (or I exist, I wish to add in order to end my letter on a light-hearted note!).

Yours most sincerely,

Professor Kopan Mahadeva, M.Sc., Ph.D.(Birm.), C.Eng., FIMfgE, FRSH, FIEE.

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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **A TOP LEVEL** court of inquiry has been ordered by the Air Force Commander to probe into the crash of the Chinese built Y8 transport aircraft on 4 July north of the Elephant Pass in northern Sri Lanka with 19 airforce personnel including six officers on board. The LTTE promptly claimed that it had shot down the aircraft and displayed for viewing in Jaffna what looked like parts of a crashed aircraft and portion of a body of a soldier reportedly recovered from the crash site. However, the Air Force denied the LTTE's claim stating that the aircraft was flying at an altitude of 6000 feet when it exploded as it nosedived due to some unexplained reason. One of the officers who died in the crash is Priyantha Fernando who is the son of the State Minister for Defence. Security forces managed to recover ten bodies of the dead personnel.

● **AFTER GIVING** an assurance to seven Tamil parties that their four-point proposal to settle the ethnic conflict would be discussed at its Central Committee, the SLFP leadership was embarrassed to find that at a recent parliamentary group meeting of the SLFP MPs, the Hela Urumaya (Sinhala Heritage) group almost railroaded a resolution to reject the four-point proposal even before the party's central committee had a chance to discuss. Moderates in the leadership were reported to have been angered by this development. The SLFP MP and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee appointed to find ways and means to settle the ethnic conflict is reported to have said: 'This will not only nullify the efforts of the PSC to find a consensus, but it will also cause irreparable damage to the SLFP's attempts to project it as a secular moderate party'. He added that some Tamil and Muslim members in the SLFP were very disappointed at the turn of events where chauvinist elements dictate terms on important policy decisions.

● **VASUDEVA NANAYAKKARA,** leader of the NSSP, recently told Parliament that the chief cause of the ethnic conflict was the attempt by the Sinhalese to bring the Tamils and Muslims under their hegemony. The best way to solve the problem was to allow the Tamils and Muslims to exercise self-government in areas in which they were in a majority in the same manner as the Sinhalese exercise control over areas in which they were a majority.

● **PLANTATION WORKERS,** both Tamils and Sinhalese, belonging to the Rochsoll estate in Pussellawa recently went on strike protesting against the alienation of 15 acres of land in that estate to outsiders belonging to the Sinhala community. About 100 Sinhala families had been allotted lands and settled on them with police protection. Cabinet Minister and leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress, S. Thondaman said that the interests of the workers had been overlooked and that allocation of lands in the estate would be rescinded by a high level committee headed by the Prime Minister. At another meeting in Welimada, Mr. Thondaman said that the CWC would not hesitate to launch a struggle if the situation arose in which the workers would be deprived of their rights which had been won by struggle and sacrifice. When the former government attempted to divide 10,000 acres of land in the Nuwara Eliya district, the workers fought against it and a worker named Latchumanan sacrificed his life and the proposed land alienation was abandoned.

● **THE EDITOR** of 'Yukthiya', a weekly newspaper, Mr. W.M. Sunanda Deshapriya, has been indicted before the High Court of Colombo by Attorney General under section 480 of Sri Lanka Penal Code in respect of a publication in its issue of April 12, 1992 purporting to be an affidavit from former Deputy Inspector General of Police Premadasa Udugampola in which certain allegations had been made damaging the reputation of the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ernest Perera. The trial has been fixed for 19 October 1992 and in the meantime the Editor has been released on bail in a sum of Rs. 50,000.

● **TWELVE ARMY** personnel have been remanded into custody in connection with the loss of a considerable quantity of gold jewellery and a large sum of money entrusted to the Army Camp for safekeeping by the Mullaitivu Peoples Bank. Cash amounting to Rs. 2,320,975 was also recovered from the possession of the arrested men.

● **BLAMING THE INDIAN** Government for shattering all communication links of the LTTE, in an interview with a correspondent of the Paris-based Tamil weekly 'Eelanadu', LTTE's main spokesman Anton Balasingham claimed that the former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was too immature to understand the Sri Lankan ethnic issue. 'It was not possible to operate an international communication network from Jaffna', he added. He also said that if the proper chance was given the LTTE would explain its stand on the Rajiv assassination and explain to the world what was the relationship they had with the Indian government. Given a chance the LTTE would also explain their stand to the present Indian Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao 'as he is better informed of the Sri Lankan problem than all other Indian politicians', Mr. Balasingham added.

● **RESPONDING TO** Tiger spokesman, Anton Balasingham's interview with Paris-based 'Eelanadu', the leader of the legislative group of Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu said that the Tigers had no interest in solving the ethnic problem and that India should under no circumstances talk to the LTTE. 'From the way the Tigers rejected the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987, it is clear that they have no interest in solving the ethnic crisis'. Deputy leader of Congress(I) in the state assembly Kumari Anandan said that the authorities should ensure that even the shadow of the Tigers does not fall on Indian soil. Criticising Balasingham's remark that Rajiv Gandhi was 'immature', Kumari Anandan pointed out that it was Mr. Gandhi who dropped food on Jaffna when the people there were starving as a result of the Sri Lankan army's intensive operations against the Tigers. As for who was responsible for Rajiv Gandhi's murder, the whole world knew that it was the handiwork of the Tigers, he added.

● **IN CONNECTION** with the bomb attack on the Joint Operations Command of the armed forces on 21 June 1991, Navalakshmi Kadiravelu alias Indira, Shanthini Sivalokanathan, Suhandini Vijaya Kumar, Arunasalam Selladurai alias Para have been indicted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act with conspiring with Varadhan, Raviraj, Pulendran, Canada Ravi and Amman to destroy the JOC headquarters and failing to give information to the authorities that Varadhan and others were in possession of explosives to commit violence between 4 April and 21 June 1991.

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THE SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

T. PATHMANATHAN

★ The New President

Although the British media has tended to be 'unusually laconic' in their comment on what is indeed a momentous event in India, the swearing of Shankar Dayal Sharma on 25th July as India's ninth President comes at a crucial moment in the history of the Indian Republic. At a time when flames of religious fanaticism and the forces of political disintegration appear to be raising their ugly faces in the Indian polity, the Harvard – Cambridge educated Sharma brings to India's most prestigious office a breath of fresh air. With a record which is universally acclaimed as 'impeccable' when skeletons are turning up in every other VIP's cupboard, Sharma is eminently suited to guide India in the right direction.

As Pope John Paul once said of himself, 'the man at the top of the heap' can either be a benign influence or a malignant one, he has already struck the right chord when, shortly after he entered the Presidential Palace 'Rastrapati Bhawan', he made a ringing declaration in support of a secular India. Quoting from 5000 year old Indian scriptures, embellishing them with quotations from the Vedas, from Buddhism, Jainism, the Koran and the Bible, he firmly pledged that the future of India's path to even greater heights lay in the direction of secularism, equal respect for all religions as enshrined in India's Constitution. 'It is a way of life that every Indian should naturally understand' declared the new President.

It has been aptly stated that the future of India is in safe hands in the troubled times that lie ahead. The mantle of the Mahatma Gandhi – Nehru – Moulana Abul Kalam Azad legacy has truly fallen on the right shoulders.

★ Kerala Gets Top Rating

In its latest report the United Nations Populations Fund has rated Kerala as being among the very best performers among developing countries in the field of human resource development. The report has identified two central factors to explain Kerala's success story in taking such a lead in development over all the northern states in India. One is the status of women in Kerala: 'It is central to the difference in performance' states the report.

Unlike in the north, in Kerala women even inherit land and there is a female literacy rate of 66%, which is double that of its nearest rival; in fact in most northern states, it is as low as 11% to 21%; Kerala has also the lowest infant mortality rate in India; its fertility rate (2.3 children per woman) is lower than that of Thailand, China and even the former Soviet Union! Contraceptive use is treble the national average. On all fronts, the rate of development of Kerala vis-a-vis the states of North India is a study in contrast.

The second determining factor is the high priority given by the state to government spending on health and education. Its high educational level has led to 10% creation in the industrial field at a rate higher than in any other state. Women in Kerala make up the highest proportion of the workforce in India, 35% overall, 45% in the private sector.

Kerala has not however, sacrificed its natural environment to industrial development. Although it has the highest population density in India – 655 persons per square metre – its forest cover rate is still high. It appears to be in short, a model state in India.

★ Chidambaram's Exit

The resignations of P. Chidambaram, Commerce Minister from the Indian Cabinet and that of V. Krishnamoorthy, a member of India's prestigious Planning Commission result in the exit from the Indian political scene of two of its ablest performers. Harvard educated Chidambaram had won international acclaim for his exceptional competence, for the bold direction that he gave to India's trade liberalisation program and his impressive record as Commerce Minister. Krishnamoorthy was one of India's most high-profile industrial magnates and was elevated to the Planning Commission for his remarkable success record; they both fell victims to the securities scandal that has rocked India's banking and financial systems and reverberated through the corridors of power.

Even the internationally highly rated US investment analysts Lehman Brothers has expressed fears that 'the political fall out from the securities scam will seriously disempower the government and fatally delay economic reform in India'.

Chidambaram and Krishnamoorthy quit of their own accord to keep in line with Prime Minister Rao's public pledge that no one however high even remotely connected with the securities scandal will be protected or shielded but their only connection with the scandal was that they owned shares – a fairly innocuous connection – in a company 'Fairgrowth Financial Services Ltd' which was linked, somewhat indirectly, to the stock-broking dealings of Harshad Mehta; they both however made prompt disclosures of their rather modest stock holdings in this firm.

If the securities scandal that has rocked India should have claimed a ministerial victim, P. Chidambaram is clearly the wrong Minister commented 'The Hindu' editorially. Was Prime Minister Rao offering a sacrificial lamb to assuage the surging tempest over the scandal? His hasty acceptance of their resignations caused considerable surprise in New Delhi.

★ The Temple Dispute

Inspite of an uproar and turmoil in both Houses of Parliament and in defiance of a court order, the B.J.P. spearheaded its campaign to go ahead with the construction of the Hindu Temple in the disputed area of Ramayana Bhoomi vs Babri Masjid Mosque. While the Central Government dilly-dallies and dithers over the issue, the B.J.P. has declared that the Mandir would be built 'come what may at any cost and at any price' and that if the Narasimha Rao Government came in its way it would meet the same fate as the V.P. Singh Government! As thousands of devotees, men and women gathered at the site, millions of head loads of concrete were poured to lay the foundation; the government is facing its severest test over its handling of this highly explosive religio-political issue.

While Muslim religious groups demanded the dismissal of the U.P. Government, Pakistan gloats over the rising tide of religious fanaticism in India. What is really at stake in this sad episode – which is really not a Hindu/Muslim issue *per se* – is the secular foundation on which India has prided itself since independence; the destruction of the Babra-Masjid Mosque could even prove to be a serious threat not only to the secular structure of Indian society but also to the unity of India itself extending well beyond Ayodhya and setting off centripetal forces on a scale that one fears even to envisage.

What is really happening at this disputed area where construction operations were allowed to proceed 'was an assault on the Constitution itself', and is 'a naked violation of the rule of law'. If the government fails in its quest for a peaceful and permanent

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solution and 'if India loses the battle of secularism, the whole region will suffer, Pakistan probably the most' says 'India Abroad'.

There is however a glimmer of hope in that a compromise has at last been reached between the Vishwa Hindu Parishad leading the agitation for the construction of the temple and the Central Government. Under this agreement, the government will appoint a judicial committee to adjudicate on the issue within 3 months. At the end of a fortnight's suspense drama of almost epic proportions, a tenuous truce has been called.

The 'Hindustan Times' called the result 'a draw'; others say that Rao has won the first round with his 'emollient touch'. Is it the end of Hindu fundamentalism or is it only a postponement of an issue that will be resurrected at some future date? 'the Supreme Court cannot decide the faith of the millions of Hindus in India' says the V.H.P./B.J.P. alliance. As one political observer wryly commented 'while the world's attention was focussed on the Olympic Games, we in India are focussing our attention on mediæval glories'.

★ World Bank sees India as Future Leader

Lauding India's performance in its Annual Report for 1991, the World Bank forecasts that India could become an economic leader by the turn of the century. Commending its success in the field of trade and economic liberalisation, the Bank's Vice-President, Mr. Joseph Wood has said: 'India could become one of the world's most dynamic economies during the second half of the 1990s and beyond'.

Optimism is also high in the Aid India consortium comprising the Western donor countries and Japan. India has reduced its account deficit in the field of borrowings from $11 billion to $3.5 billion; its fiscal deficit has dropped from 9% of the gross domestic product (G.D.P.) to 6.5% of G.D.P. and in so doing has kept the pledge given by the Narasimha Rao Government. In industrial de-regulation and promoting foreign investment, progress has been noted to be quite 'impressive'. The G.D.P. growth is projected at 2.5% this year and is expected to reach 5% in 2 to 3 years.

The stock market scandal that rocked India's markets has, fortunately not upset the confidence of the donor countries and the credibility of the central government's economic reform program remains high. While inflation remains at about 12% and must necessarily come down, the Division Chief of Indian desk of the World Bank considers it a 'respectable performance' in the context of the huge economic burdens and political problems that India is currently facing.

There is no better proof of India's performance than the fact that her main donor countries and aid giving agencies have increased their aid commitments by $500 million for the ensuing year.

The US in particular has commended India for its 'courageous and bold measures' to reform the economy and assured India that it can count on its continued support. 'India deserves broad recognition and respect for successfully tackling its balance-of-payments crisis and reducing macro-economic imbalances' – declared the head of the US delegation at the recently concluded Aid consortium meeting in Paris. The task ahead is to get the budget under control, accumulate sufficient reserves, encourage direct foreign investments and make the Indian rupee a convertible currency. If the present pace of development could be sustained, India could well become a major player in the world's economic arena.

★ US Warns Pakistan

Inspite of the Pakistan Foreign Office's recent denial, it is fairly common ground among the foreign media that US Secretary of State, James Baker had made his position categorically clear that Islamabad 'is abetting terrorism in India'.

In a meeting last month between Baker and the visiting Pakistan Foreign Minister and Pakistan Ambassador to the US which according to media reports in the US lasted 'a tense 45 minutes', Baker is reported to have 'sternly lectured' to them about Islamabad's support for Kashmir separatists fighting for independence from India. He had 'not budged' and stood by the warning given in his earlier letters hand delivered to Prime Minister Nawaz Shariff by the US Ambassador in Pakistan that Pakistan could be branded 'a terrorist state' if it continued its tacit support for Kashmiri militants. The letter noted that the American intelligence reports had tallied with New Delhi in its 'perception of Pakistani support' for Kashmiri militants and Pakistan's claim that such allegations were 'part of the Indian Government's propaganda' did not cut much ice! The letter had cited section 620(a) of the US 'Foreign Assistance Act' which provides for the suspension of aid to any country that supports terrorism 'if the Secretary of State so determines'. The US has in the meantime advised all its allies and also Russia not to interfere in the Kashmir issue.

The Kashmir issue apart, it is clear from signals emanating from Capitol Hill, the State Department and the White House that there appears to be a tilt towards India in recent Indo-US relations. President Bush in a statement in Washington declared that 'the India-Pakistan rivalry particularly over Kashmir is a serious threat to regional stability' and that both countries should use the SIMLA ACCORD to settle their differences. On Indo-US relations, President Bush stated that 'the end of the cold war created a new opportunity to renew old and close relations with India and that India has a major role to play in the world today'. He went further in warming up towards India and added that Indians in the US are 'a productive successful and enriching addition to the American melting pot'.

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Gandhi Assassination Probe

Notices Issued on Former Police Chief and Dixit

The Jain Commission of Inquiry has issued notices to the Foreign Secretary, J.N. Dixit and a retired Tamil Nadu police official, K. Mohandas, directing them to narrate the sequence of events that culminated in Rajiv Gandhi's assassination.

Mr. Justice M.C. Jain chairman of the commission, set up to find out if there was a conspiracy behind the assassination, told UNI that they had been given three weeks to file their affidavits.

The two have been asked to trace the origin of the factors which eventually cost Rajiv Gandhi his life and the chain of events culminating in the assassination.

Asked why the notices were issued so late (nearly 11 months after the constitution of the commission), Mr. Justice Jain said these had become necessary in view of a just published book written by Mr. Mohandas.

The author has noted in the book that it was unfair to blame Rajiv Gandhi for the country's 'catastrophic' Sri Lankan policy and that most of the blame should lie on his policy advisers.

Mr. Dixit, who played a pivotal role in shaping the Sri Lankan policy was the high commissioner in Colombo when the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was sent to the troubled island nation.

Mr. Mohandas, who claims to give an 'authentic' account of the Sri Lankan Tamils issue, asserts in his book that Rajiv Gandhi had been misled into continuing the 'dual policy' of being committed to Sri Lanka's integrity on the one hand, and 'permitting training of armed militant groups' on Indian soil on the other. Rajiv Gandhi's advisers had 'vested interests' Mr. Mohandas says.

The questionnaire given to Mr. Dixit by the commission asks him to trace the origin of the Tamil Eelam concept, the Government of India's stand on it and other related matters.

Mr. Justice Jain said the commission had also issued notice to Mrs. Kumudavalli, who filed a 'sensational' affidavit before the Verma Commission of inquiry some months ago, accusing Mrs. Latha Priyakumar, daughter of a senior Congress(I) leader, of hobnobbing with suspected members of the assassination squad.

Mr. Justice Jain said Mrs. Kumudavalli was yet to file the affidavit, though it had been a few weeks since the notice was issued to her. Other material defaulters are the then Union Home Secretary, Mr. R.K. Bhargava, the Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP). So far 52 parties have filed their affidavits before the commission which, among other things, is probing 'conspiracy in all its ramifications. . .', regarding the assassination.

Among the important affidavits filed before the commission are those of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Union Home Ministry.

The SIT has also enclosed a copy of the chargesheet which it filed recently in a Designated Court in Madras in connection with the assassination. The affidavits of the IB and the RAW have been filed by their chiefs, Mr. A.N. Vaidya and Mr. N. Narasimhan and run to about 20 pages each. The Union Home Ministry's affidavit has been filed by the Home Secretary, Mr. M.D. Godbole.

According to sources in the security agencies, the affidavits by the intelligence agencies give a long account of the varying threat perceptions vis-a-

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Tales of old retold

BEWARE THE CHEATS

by Richards Karunairajan

People who are vulnerable to cheats are likely to end up as the man who lost his goat.

One day a farmer from Sithankerny went to the Chunnakam Market to buy a goat. When he found one which was just nine months old, he bought it for Rs.100. After treating himself to a glass of tea at the Ambal Café, he began to walk back home through Alaveddy, Sandilipay and Pandatheruppu, with the goat trailing behind him on a lead.

Unfortunately for the farmer, three rogues had seen him buying the little goat and decided to cheat him out of it. Having made a plan to outwit him, they took their respective positions at various points on his path.

When the farmer with his goat passed the Alaveddy junction, the first rogue asked him in a friendly manner as to where he was coming from and why he was dragging a dog along with him.

The farmer laughed and said: 'Dog! You must be blind. Can't you see this is a goat?'

So saying he walked on until he came to the Sandilipay junction where he was accosted by the second rogue who was seated under a giant banyan tree. He too looked at the goat and made a cynical remark about the farmer dragging a mangy dog behind him.

Puzzled at this remark the farmer stopped on his path, took a good look at the goat and then with anger seething within him, told the rogue that he was crazy just like the other man down the road. Feeling a sense of compassion for the young goat, he decided to carry it on his shoulders like a good shepherd.

But when he came past the Pandatheruppu junction the third rogue seated on a culvert near the Amman Veethi began to mock and ridicule him for carrying a dog on his shoulders.

Unable to tolerate this any more he wondered whether he himself had gone crazy. He set the goat down, had an even closer look and came to the sad conclusion that he was carrying a dog and not a goat. After all, he said to himself, three people have said it was a dog.

Incensed at his foolishness, he chased the animal away and walked home to Sithankerny a loser. As for the three rogues, they feasted on the poor goat to their fill.

Isn't it true that a lie repeated may begin to look like the truth?

(Names of places have been used in this retold tale to familiarise them to new generations of our young people who have made their homes outside the Tamil homeland of Sri Lanka.)

UK Seeks to Tighten Asylum Laws

by T. Pathmanathan
South London Tamil Welfare Group

On 20 January 1980, Viraj Mendis of Sri Lanka was forcibly removed from sanctuary in the Church of Ascension in Manchester and deported to SRI LANKA handcuffed to immigration officers! The campaign that was launched in his favour, though unsuccessful, received extensive media coverage in Britain; from then onwards, immigration issues linked to asylum rights have remained in the forefront of the media in the United Kingdom.

Immigration and Nationality Laws are often talked about together as though they are synonymous; 'citizenship' and 'the right of residence' are similarly considered interchangeable terms; they are in fact, both different covering two separate areas of law. 'Nationality' defines the country of which people are citizens and which issues them passports. 'Immigration' on the other hand is the system of laws and rules by which each country decides who shall be able to enter and live in a country.

The concept of asylum – its origins are religious – goes back to the 16th century to the Wars of Religion which ended with the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Asylum rights had right up to 1951 been dealt with in an ad-hoc manner with a series of international treaties to deal with particular situations viz. with Armenians in the twenties and with refugees from Germany in the thirties. It was in 1951, that a common international instrument was designed to deal with refugees generally, the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees established by the UN. This too was originally confined to refugees in Europe but was extended to cover all refugees irrespective of geographical barriers by the UN Protocol of 1967. A refugee was defined herein as 'a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group, who is outside the country of his nationality and is unwilling or unable to avail himself of the protection of that country'.

The above definition though ostensibly simple has lent itself to varied and contentious interpretations at the hands of both UK Home Office spokesmen and lawyers appearing for asylum seekers; what is 'persecution'?. When is it 'well founded' or 'ill founded'? Is it related to threats to human **life** or is it when human **rights** are threatened or violated? Are the criteria to be used subjective or objective in the determination of the issue? Such endless esoteric arguments are often raised. The significant principle is that the person seeking asylum must be **outside** the country, when he makes the application. Once this principle enshrined in the convention provisions is established, the question arises whether those who appear at an airport with false documents or without documents can be turned away at airports and deported? (It is common knowledge that passports are either forged or taken away by 'agents' or flushed down the toilets of the aircraft!)

The UN Convention of 1951 makes it clear that the fact of the asylum seeker resorting to forged documents or visas should not adversely affect that person's application *per se;* 'a country **shall not** impose on refugees penalties on account of their illegal entry or presence'.

There are other contentious issues like whether an applicant who arrives in London via a third country say India or Kenya could claim asylum in the UK? Why did he not claim asylum in that country? Besides, if deportation is considered, the question is as to which country is he to be deported? Viz. he has either a false passport or no passport and the third country, need not accept him!

Although persecution is the only ground on which an asylum seeker can claim asylum, neither UK nor any western country, in practice has sent them home, generally speaking, when they face 'serious humanitarian problems', particularly when it is impossible for anyone to conclusively prove objective evidence of persecution; it is equally unreasonable to expect a host country to **automatically** accept anyone coming from a country with a poor human rights record. In the face of this dilemma, the determination of each individual asylum right application together with the enormous financial implications to the host country when such asylum seekers reach large numbers – is the heart of the asylum problem. The onus is on the host country to disprove the case put forward by the applicant. Consequently there has hitherto been a pragmatic almost liberal or even a lax approach to the determination of such issues. The result is that in UK about 90% of all applications have so far been allowed to stay though only 20% were recognised as 'refugees'; fewer than 10% were actually refused or deported.

Recently, the magnitude of the numbers applying for asylum or those awaiting a decision on applications already, made, some over 2 years ago have reached such alarming proportion that the UK, in concert with its partners in the European Community have now taken a firm decision to clamp down on asylum applications and to apply stricter criteria all around in its decision making processes. The reasons why the numbers have escalated are not far to seek. Applying for asylum confers the following immediate benefits on any asylum seeker:-

(i) it provides immediate admission into the country;

(ii) it allows a person already here to stay on while the application is being processed; this could take 2 years or more;

(iii) it provides immediate legal access to social security benefits and housing accomodation;

(iv) it provides a fair chance of staying on 'indefinitely' – those granted what is called 'exceptional leave to remain' (ELR) may eventually after 7 years get 'indefinite leave to remain' (ILR).

The above benefits have led to the present tide of asylum applications; it has multiplied ten fold in 3 years!: from 4,000 in 1988 to over 50,000 up to March 1991, (excluding dependants!). The UK Home Office geared itself to this huge task by increasing its staff from 50 in 1988 to 550 by 1st June 1992! During the subsequent 2 months the number of asylum applicants had increased to 70,000!

The UK Government therefore decided that the only way out of this seemingly impossible task is to speed up the decision making process, which in turn means to a change in the law. This led to a new asylum bill being presented in Parliament in November 1991; it was not possible to push it through Parliament before its dissolution early this year. Prime Minister, John Major now hopes to present the bill before autumn. The problem is being simultaneously met by similar measures in other E.C. countries in an effort to harmonise the law and its procedures so that no one country becomes more attractive for asylum seekers than the other! By June 1992, over 600,000 applications had flowed into Europe and the cost of dealing with the problem has been estimated at $5 billion!

In the UK, a recent study team

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BOOK REVIEW

MGR: Image and Reality

MGR: THE MAN AND THE MYTH: by Kondath Mohandas, 22, Panther Publishers, 29, III Cross Main, Koramangala, IV Block, Bangalore-560034. Rs. 195.

The most charismatic person of his time and a real phenomenon that Marudhur Gopala Menon Ramachandran (MGR) was, any biographical account of him is fascinating; more so is this book which is authored by one who was almost the shadow of MGR, thinking and acting for him for nearly ten years when the matinee idol-turned politician presided over the destiny of Tamil Nadu.

In a way this is also the life-history of the author, Mohandas himself, an accomplished police officer, in so far as his functioning as MGR's eyes and ears and 'bogeyman' during that eventful period.

The story takes off from Vaigai Dam where the author casually meets the cine star then engaged in a film shooting in 1969. Eight years later, at the invitation of MGR as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mohandas joins him as his intelligence chief and soon gets so close to the power centre as to be reckoned the *de facto* Chief Minister.

The ring-side view has afforded him the advantage of knowing a lot on the personal and social life of the 'man of contradictions' which information he shares with his readers through this 'honest account', including MGR's extra-marital affairs and lady friends, taking care to avoid hurting the feelings of others in the process. There is enough here to perceive the role the author has played, albeit behind the scene, in the transformation of MGR from a glamorous cult-oriented personality of the make-believe world into a Chief Minister with a great mission.

Mohandas, a highly controversial officer from the beginning, however strongly disputes the general belief that MGR always acted on his advice. 'I was playing a strictly professional role'. MGR was so close to him because, 'he knew that I was the only person who gave him information or facts as they were, whether they pleased him or not, and he appreciated that'.

Though sympathetic to MGR the author is objectively critical in his presentation. According to him, many of MGR's decisions were taken on impulse or intuition, depending on his mood and not based on logic or reason. He knew that the tentacles of corruption were fast eating into the vitals of the administration, particularly during his second innings as Chief Minister; but, apart from being annoyed by the fact, he kept quiet. In spite of the sound advice given by the author against the noon meal scheme for school children for its potential to turn Tamil Nadu into a 'State of beggars' besides creating a large resource crunch to the exchequer, MGR projected himself also as a no-nonsense administrative chief. But, 'I soon felt that my opinion, when MGR became Chief Minister, was not well-founded. The hero was itching to go the way of other Chief Ministers and Prime Ministers'. That was the myth. The only factor that could stand him in good stead was the adoring masses who would not accept that MGR could do anything wrong. That was his greatest asset which rarely any political leader has. For all practical purposes the AIADMK which he founded was 'one man's party', and that perhaps made him reject the author's suggestion to name the No.2 in the party. 'There will be no party after me; after me, the deluge', was MGR's response which, however, has turned out to be a wrong prediction.

A third of this beautifully produced 180-page volume is occupied by matters relating to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, the extension to Tamil Nadu of the crisis in the form of large-scale influx of refugees and armed militants as also the reaction and response to it of the Government and the people of India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular. In these pages the author, who along with MGR, was in the thick of the problem, has made several revelations which, though they have already come out in bits and pieces, clearly expose the inadequacies and inconsistencies in India's Sri Lanka policy and the inept handling of the sensitive issue at different stages.

He gives first-hand information about the training camps for the Sri Lankan Tamil militants conducted in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, New Delhi and elsewhere, the assistance extended to the revolutionaries across the Palk Straits, the thrusting of the India-Sri Lanka Accord on the Tamil Tigers and the sending of the Indian Peace Keeping Force to Jaffna to control insurgency.

It has been the author's personal view from Day One that 'India had no business to interfere in the internal affairs of another country on the ground of ethnic affinity or whatever; if anyone does not agree with this, he has no right to question Pakistan for helping militants in Punjab and Kashmir.

Mohandas has given a blow by blow account of the as yet little known 'Operation Tiger' in which he successfully accomplished the risky task of disarming the Sri Lankan militants in their training camps in different parts of Tamil Nadu the like of which India has not seen before. This dramatic State-wide swoop on the eve of SAARC meeting in Bangalore in November 1986, which resulted in the haul of sophisticated armaments, then worth Rs.40 crores, once again pushed the Government of India into an awkward situation. He also exposes the 'cover-up bid' of Central Intelligence agency officials who tried to mislead the State police into believing the Meenambakkam airport blast was an act of Mossad while actually the LTTE was behind the incident in which 30 persons got killed.

Rejecting the charge that the Operation Disarm Tigers was his own high-handed act, Mohandas asserts that it was carried out under instructions from 'competent authority'. The former IPS officer also speaks on how professional jealousy worked overtime in both Madras and New Delhi to disrupt the cordial relationship he was having with MGR. For all that he had done for MGR and Tamil Nadu, the author is sad that he was subjected to harassment and humiliation towards the end of a distinguished career and before retiring in 1990 as Chairman of a State-owned transport corporation in the rank of Director-General of Police.

C. Raghavan.

(Courtesy: *The Hindu*).

The MGR Phenomenon

THE IMAGE TRAP – M.G. Ramachandran in film and Politics: By M.S.S. Pandian, Sage Publications India Pvt. Lt. M-32, Greater Kailash Market I, New Delhi-110048. Rs. 190 (hard back) or Rs. 85 (paper back).

MGR the phenomenon provides enough material for any number of books and theories. The fact was that in his life and death, he defied all theories and created a niche for himself that will be difficult to erase or understand.

And this is precisely what the author, Pandian, a fellow of the Madras Institute of Development Studies, tries to explore in his book. Unfortunately, it appears to be a biased picture,

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READERS FORUM

LTTE's BAN

YOUR JOURNAL has given wide publicity to the banning of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by the Indian government. While the involvement of the LTTE in alleged criminal activities in India, including the murder of Rajiv Gandhi last year and the leaders of the EPRLF in the previous year, may have prompted its ban, those who believe in freedom of expression and the democratic right of organisations to function without let or hindrance cannot ordinarily support the banning of the LTTE.

The LTTE supporters are however in no position to protest or criticise the ban by invoking these rights because they condoned and even defended the LTTE when it not only banned all other Tamil political parties and groups operating in the Tamil areas, but also set about the task of physically eliminating them.

The other point I wish to comment on is the attempt on the part of the LTTE and its supporters to attribute the ban and other actions taken against the LTTE in India to a conspiracy by the Brahmin dominated press. Not so long ago, the top leadership of the LTTE was in close collaboration and wining and dining with the leading press people, mostly Brahmins, in India and that was at a time they generally supported the LTTE. Now that the Tigers have lost their support, suddenly the Brahminic conspiracy has been invented in a futile attempt to mask their own political ineptitude in having not only dissipated, but also alienated almost the wholehearted support that the Tamil cause was receiving from the Indian people.

K. Shanthakumar

Kenton Lane,
Middlesex, UK.

SELF-DETERMINATION, REFERENDUM, AND PLEBISCITE

WITHIN THE space provided in the Readers Forum, I wish to respond to some of the important questions raised by reader C.S. Maniam of Ontario, Canada (*TT*, June 1992), on the question of self-determination and the territory of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Regarding the terms referendum and plebiscite, I will better quote two paragraphs written by an authority in South Asian politics in 1975. Norman Palmer, in his book, *Elections and Political Development – The South Asian Experience* (Duke University Press, North Carolina, pp.98-100), noted:

> 'The view that elections express "the will of the people" assumes that elections serve as plebiscites or referenda. Obviously certain elections are specifically designed for this purpose. A standard dictionary definition of a plebiscite is "a vote by which the people of an entire country or district express an opinion for or against a proposal". This may be on a fairly specific or limited proposal, or it may be on a proposal of great significance, such as the use of a plebiscite to determine whether a people wish to remain in one country or join another. When a nationwide general election is interpreted as a plebiscite, this usually implies that the election is an expression of the people's choice of a government or an expression of confidence or lack of confidence in a ruler.
>
> 'A referendum, again according to a dictionary definition, is "the principle" or practice of submitting to popular vote a measure passed upon or proposed by a legislative body or by popular initiative. In this technical sense the use of a referendum is provided for in the constitutions of a number of political systems. In the more general sense a national election may also be viewed as a referendum, not so much on a specific proposal or proposals of the government or ruler as on the overall record and degree of popular confidence in the government or ruler. . .'

In this context, the call by the TULF in 1977 that the general election be assessed as a plebiscite for a separate state is a valid one.

Maniam also wonders, 'how to find out the "self-determination" of a people? Is it by a referendum or plebiscite or is it determined for them by their leaders?' Well, how about looking for some historical precedence on this issue. Let us take the revolutionary history of the USA. No referendum or plebiscite was conducted in the 13 colonies of the then USA, before they waged their war against the British Crown. Out of a population of approximately 3.8 million, 56 individuals (slave-owning white males, who claimed themselves as the 'American patriots') took it upon themselves to sign the declaration of independence on July 4, 1776, and conduct a revolutionary war against the 'King of Great Britain'. They wanted self-determination because, among many other causes, 'He (the King of Great Britain) has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. . .' All these grievances which the American Patriots had against the King of Britain, resemble the grievances of Tamils against the ruling Sinhalese regime.

About the Tamil territory in the island of the then Ceylon, I would suggest those interested to see the map presented in the *Area Handbook for Ceylon* (1971), published for the United States Government, and printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office. Fig.6, appearing on page 33, provides a 1796-map, which shows the northern and eastern provinces (from Puttalam to Pottuvil) as a single entity, labelled under 'Jaffna Kommandement'. Interestingly, this map has been adopted from the work of C.W. Nicholas and S. Paranavitana, *A Concise History of Ceylon* (1961), pp.208-209. And most Tamils know where S. Paranavitana stood in his view related to the ethnicity of Sinhalese and Tamils. If Paranavitana himself has acknowledged this historical reality, who else has more authority to challenge this 1796 map?

One last note: regarding the presence of dagobas and vihares in the Eastern province (as well as the northern province), reader Maniam can refer to Mudaliyar Rasanayagam's classic work, *Ancient Jaffna*, about which I wrote a commentary in the April 1989 issue of the *Tamil Times*.

Sincerely yours,

Sachi Sri Kantha

6-2-4- Furuedai, Suita,
Osaka 565, Japan.

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vis Rajiv Gandhi, their correspondence with the centre and states and also their suggestions about dealing with certain problems.

The commission, however, was not satisfied with the affidavits of the IB and the RAW and had directed them to give more details and annex copies of their correspondence and other relevant documents.

Other political parties such as the DMK the AIADMK and the DK have filed their affidavits before the commission.

Mr. Justice Jain said the first hearing of the commission would definitely be held 'in the last week of this month' – UNI.

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek fair professional qualified bride, citizen or PR of States for doctor, 29, working in States. Write with horoscope. M 606 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu *seeks partner for niece, 27, pretty and attractive, Australian resident. Send horoscope, details. M 607 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents, *UK citizens, seek bride for son, 30, M.Sc. in electronics, non-smoker, teetotaller, employed as design engineer in a multi-national in UK. Send details. M 608 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu *seeks bride for her brother, 33, qualified engineer in well established business, UK resident. Send details, horoscope. M 609 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu *seeks partner for his accountant brother, 35, 5', holding high position in London, Mars seventh house. Send horoscope details. M 610 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek groom over 34 for British citizen, attractive daughter, with British Master's degree and good employment. Contact with horoscope, details. M 611 c/o Tamil Times.*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couple on their recent wedding and reception.

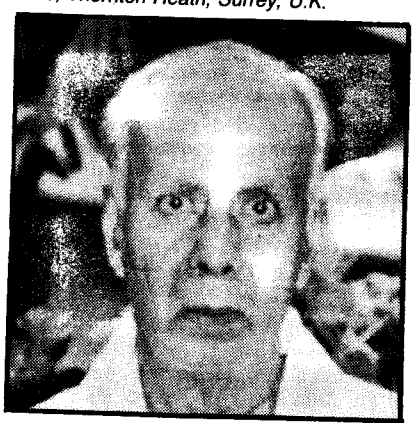
Mohan *son of Mr & Mrs. K. Yogendran of 1 Florence Road, Sanderstead, South Croydon, UK. and* **Bina** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. V. Thambiah, 158 Winchmore Hill Road, London N21 1QP on 30th July 1992 at Royal Chase Hotel, Enfield, Middx., U.K. and reception at Christison Hall, Dulwich College, London SE21 on 1st August 1992.*

'Matching Horoscopes'
For marriage compatibility
Contact: M. Sivarajah
Tel: 081 767 8699.

VAVUNIYA
August 1985
Independent British Researcher seeks Witnesses, Survivors, Relatives.
All information received in Strict Confidence.
Reply in First Instance to:
Box E 55 c/o Tamil Times

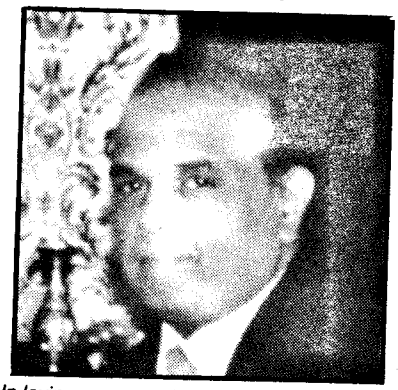
OBITUARIES

Mr. Thambapillai Ramanathan, *Distribution Engineer, London Electricity; beloved husband of Nirmala Yogaranee; son of the late Mr. Thambapillai, retired postmaster and Mrs. Sellamma Thambapillai of Kalviankadu, Jaffna; son-in-law of the late Mr. Yogananthan (Retired, Excise Dept.) and Mrs. Selvamany Yogananthan; brother of Mrs. Maheswary Seevaratnam (Jaffna), the late Somasekeram (retired Secretary Consol Expo), Dr. Rajah Muthiah (Australia), Mrs. Sivapackiam Velauthar (Puttalam), Mrs. Sivakamipillai Nadarajah (Jaffna), and Yogananthar (Solicitor, Yoga & Co., U.K.); brother-in-law of Mrs. Selvayogam Yogananthan, Thirupurasunthary (Colombo), Mrs. Hema Somasekeram (USA), Mrs. Kanagamma Rajah Muthiah (Australia), Mrs. Suhunavathani Yogananthar (UK) passed away under tragic circumstances while on duty on 21st July '92 and was cremated on 25th July – 9 Osbourne Gardens, Thornton Heath, Surrey, U.K.*



Mr. Thiagar Murugesar *(Retired Assistant Commissioner of Co-operative Development) of Main Street, Tellippalai, Sri Lanka; beloved husband of Rajeswari; father of Tharmarajah (Singapore), Krishnarajah, Sornadevi, Manohari, Thiagarajah, Varatharajah (all of U.K.), Anantharajah (Canada), Thillainadarajah (Germany), Sounthararajah (U.K.); father-in-law of Kanageswary, Navamani, the late Thambipillai, Sivaneasan, Sumangali, Inthumathi, Sathaikala, Rajani and Suntharakumari; grandfather of several grandchildren passed away in Chithengerni, Jaffna, Srilanka on 29th July 1992 and was cremated on 30th July. A pooja and prayers in his memory will be held at 10.30am on Saturday, 29th August 1992 at Archway Murugan Temple, London N6, followed by lunch at the same place. All friends and relatives are kindly requested to accept this notice. – 37 Wendover Court, Western Avenue, London W3 0TG.*

IN MEMORIAM

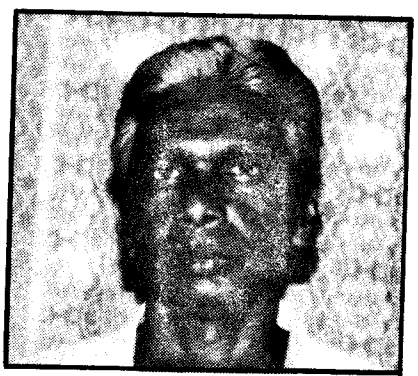


In loving memory of **Kanagasabai Ganakanthiran (Andrew Gannon)** *on the first anniversary of his passing away on 19.8.91.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his parents, brother Manickenthiran, sister Indradevi, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces. – 14 Newdale Place, Brampton, Ontario L6S F2Z, Canada.

In fond memory of **Mrs. Sinnathangam Supiah** *(Retired Headmistress, Arunasalam Vidyasalai, Alavaddy, Sri Lanka) on the fourth anniversary of her passing away on 20.8.88.*

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by her children Sivathasan and Sivarupavathy; daughter-in-law Sivadevi; son-in-law Sivasubramaniam and grandchildren Kuhan, Nirupa, Meera, and Parathan – 303 Hempstead Road, Gillingham, Kent M37 3QJ.



Mr. Gunaratnam, *Formerly Divisional Superintendent of Post Offices, on the second anniversary of his passing away on 28.8.90.*

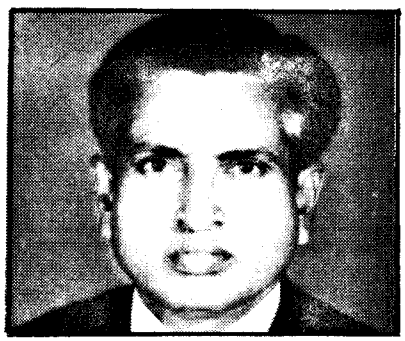
Sadly missed by his loving wife Rani, children Thiru, Vasuki, Devaki (Australia), Sutharsan (U.K.) and Saratha Devi; son-in-law Radhakrishnan (Australia); grand daughter Mayurica, sister and in-laws. – 68 B Grove Road, North Finchley, London N12 9DY.

Continued on page 26

Continued from page 25

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Yogamany Kandiah *Departed 2.9.91. Fondly remembered on the first anniversary of her passing away by her beloved husband; children Chandrakumaran (Canada), Chandrakumary (Bury, U.K.), Chandrasekeran (U.K.), Chandramalar, Chandrakanthi, Chandramohan (all of Canada) and Chandrakala (Australia); sons-in-law Rajasooriyar, Wigneswaran, Sivasekaram and Pathmanandavel; daughters-in-law Usha, Shantini and Mirunalini; brother Yogarajah and several grand children – 49 Courtlands Drive, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 0HN.*



Mr. Mayilvaganam Velummayilum *J.P., U.M., Attorney-at-law and former Chairman, Urban Council, Point Pedro, Sri Lanka passed away on 31.8.89, and the third anniversary of his demise falls on 31.8.92.*

Sadly missed by his loving wife, children Thayanandarajah (U.K.), Nithiyanandarajah (New Zealand), Mayilvaganarajah (U.K.), Chitra, Anandarajah, Krishnarajah and Jayanthi (all of Sri Lanka), in-laws, friends, relatives and a host of grateful constituents – 59 Edgwarebury Gardens, Edgware, Middx., HA8 8LL, U.K.

A tribute to K. Anandarajah

Relatives and friends mourn the passing away in New York, USA of K. Anandarajah, Professional Engineer, Department of Transport, USA on the 28th of May 1992 after a brief illness. He leaves behind his beloved wife Thevi, his beloved children Gowri, Ananthi, Shankar and Sunthar, and many grieving relatives and friends.

Ana, as he was affectionately known to friends was a harmless soul. He had no enemies, anyone he met invariably became a close friend of his in time. Ana was an unassuming person, ever ready to help anyone who needed help, never expecting anything in return. Whenever any of his friends visited the USA, Ana would visit them, take them home and insist that they stayed with him for a few days. This is typical of the man. Ana was also a devoted family man.

Ana was one of the pioneers of Tamil education in the UK. He, along with Mr. Thiruchelvam started Tamil classes at the Wimbledon Community Centre as far back as 1973. Tamil children from London and surroundings attended those classes and not only acquired a knowledge of Tamil culture and language but also greatly enjoyed each other's company. Ana's daughter Gowri was among the first few Tamils in the UK, to have had their arangetram in Baratha Natyam held in the UK.

Ana's end came quite unexpectedly since he had been so fit and healthy all his life. He had been looking forward to retirement in September '92 and making plans to come to the UK and spend more time with friends. But Bagawan decided otherwise. At times like this one is made to wonder why Bagawan should take away such a kind, helpful and harmless soul so soon.

May Ana's soul rest in peace in Bagawan. May Bagawan give Thevi, Gowri, Ananthi, Shankar and Sunthar inner peace and strength to carry on with life.

Dr. K. Sivaloganathan.

S.C.O.T.

The Standing Committee of Tamil-Speaking People – (S.C.O.T.) founded in 1977 is a UK based charity committed to the relief of poverty among the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It seeks to achieve this by stimulating and supporting sustainable development programmes in the Tamil areas through its contacts with international aid agencies and NGO partners in Sri Lanka. SCOT is also engaged in campaigning for Human Rights in Sri Lanka.

If you wish to find out more about SCOT's work and how you can contribute to it, please contact the Secretary, 16 Semley Road, Norbury, London SW16 4PH (Tel: 081 764 7912).

Some of its Activities:

Fishing Industry in Tamil Areas

Pre 1983 levels of output suggested that 75% of Sri Lanka's fish requirements were met from the Tamil areas. To assess the prospects for reviving this key area of economic activity, a preliminary study has been initiated by SCOT and DATA DEV, a Colombo based research organisation, with the active involvement of the University of Jaffna. The study itself will be directed by Dr. Sivalingam (former FAO Aquaculturist) and Dr. Meena Dharmaratnam of the University. The aim of the studies will be to identify and cost the steps necessary to rehabilitate the industry to its pre-wear levels. This will involve replacement of equipment (boats, nets, outboard engines etc.), and the development of ancillary facilities such as ice plants, storage, boatyards etc. Much of the basic data relating to the aquatic resources are available to Dr. Sivalingam, who will now update and collate it. This preliminary survey is funded by SCOT.

In a separate initiative, Prof. Thurairajah, Vice Chancellor of the Jaffna University, who visited Norway recently, has entered into negotiations for establishing a Faculty of Fisheries at the University with support from the Norwegian Government.

Rehabilitation of Widows

One unfortunate consequence of the war in the Tamil areas is the growing number of widows, particularly from the low income groups. The Refugees Rehabilitation Organisation (TRRO) headed by Prof. Sivathamby has registered 3000 widows who require assistance to maintain their livelihoods. The TRRO has already assisted 1000 of these widows by setting them up in traditional small scale self employment ventures such as poultry and dairy farming, cultivation and sewing at an average cost of Rs. 10,000 per head. It has now developed a practical programme through which this rehabilitation process could be expanded over the five AGA divisions in the Jaffna District. SCOT is currently supporting this programme.

Other Recent Grants

SCOT also supports relief operations of the Ramakrishna Missions in Colombo and Batticaloa and the Federation of YMHA's in Trincomalee. It is also collaborating with Oxfam in its work among Muslim refugees.

SCOT Presents Cultural Evening

Followers of the performing arts in London are beneficiaries of regular performances by a rich array of Tamil artistic talent in the fields of music, drama and dance. The evening of Saturday 11 July was no exception when the Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking Peoples (SCOT) presented two Tamil plays and a violin duet at the Charles Cryer Studio Theatre in Carshalton. The violin recital was by the excellent mother and son duo, Dr Lakshmi Jayan and Selvan Arvind Jayan and the plays were by the admirable Tamil Performing Arts Society.

This drama group, with a dedicated and talented array of artistes, have enjoyed much deserved success in Sri Lanka with over a hundred stagings of their plays. In addition, performances have included radio and television broadcasts. The first Tamil play televised on Roopavahini was theirs. Since 1985, in London, their thought provoking plays have continued to attract a widespread and appreciative audience. The opening item of the evening was the play 'Mannikkavum' in two parts, 'Pirathiyehak Kaatchi' and 'Tharisanam'. The first part was a thoroughly entertaining but critical parody of social manners.

The play, which had the audience in splits of laughter, ends when the mild mannered guest turns the table on his pretentious hosts and exposes their fears and inadequacies. The acting was uniformly excellent by Anan-

darani Balendra, Manoharan Manuelpillai and Kanagasabai Krishnarajah. The theme 'Mannikavum' continued with the second part, 'Tharisanam', using the same key character who finds himself apologising for the weaknesses of his manipulative inquisitors. Krishnarajah was joined here by the multi-talented director of the plays. Balendra.

The violin concert that followed was a treat. Dr. Lakshmi Jayan, a renowned violinist who considers Lalgudi Jayaraman as her guru and guiding light, along with her son Arvind and the accompanists, enthralled the audience with a delightful repertoire of pieces in Tamil, Thelengu and Sanskrit. Dr. Jayan has given several performances, both as a solo artiste and as an accompanist to leading musicians, in the UK, other European countries and India. She also conducts a violin school in Lalgudi's name.

The opening Varnam, in Nalinakanti ragam, was composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman, as was the penultimate Thillana, in Madhuvanthi ragam. The highlights were the kirthanas, Paratpara Parameswara by Papanasam Sivan and Nagumomu Ganaleni by Thyagaraja Swamigal.

Arvind displayed a range and depth of such maturity in his playing which belied his youth. He must surely rank in the forefront of young talent in carnatic music in this country. Arvind's own guru, his mother Lakshmi Jayan, has nurtured his talents splendidly.

The accompanists, Somasundaram Desigar on the mridangam and Bangalore Prakash on the ghatam, gave admirable support to the violinists and displayed their full talents in the 'thani aavarthanam'. The enjoyment of the artistes themselves was evident and it was nice to see the ghatam being thrown up in the traditional way during the finale.

The evening's entertainment concluded with a play. 'Bharatha Tharmam'. The story, adapted from the Mahabaratham, describes how the exemplary Pandavas used an innocent low caste family to fake their own deaths, highlighting the plight of the innocents manipulated by the ruthless and the powerful. The message was poignant and hard-hitting, more so due to the many contemporary parallels in today's world. The singing at the end of the play, led by Nirmala Rajasingham, was exhilarating and performed with great emotion. Performances by the entire cast, Santhakumam, Krishnarajah, Rajasingham and Balendra, were superb, brought together once again under the able direction of Balendra. A few words in closing must be said about the venue. The Charles Cryer Studio Theatre, situated in Carshalton, South London, this charming venue with excellent facilities enhanced the enjoyment of the audience and performers alike.

K. Sanguhan.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

September 5 *Aavani Moolam.*

Sept. 7 *Ekathashi.*

Sept. 8 *Pirathosham.*

Sept. 11 Full Moon.

Sept. 19 *Purattathi Sani (1st week).*

Sept. 20 *5.00pm* **Pattapishekam** *staged by the pupils of South London Tamil School at Victoria Hall, Ealing Town Hall, New Broadway, London W5. Tel: 081 680 8578/647 3856.*

Sept. 22 *Ekathashi.*

Sept. 24 *Piratosham.*

Sept. 26 *Ammavasai.*

Sept. 26 *7.30pm Sutton Subrang presents Bharatha Natyam Recital by Chitra Visweswaran, at Secombe Centre, Cheam Road, Sutton, Surrey. For tickets & details Tel: 081 644 0972/393 5815/661 1366/641 1272.*

Sept. 27 *Navarathiri Festival (First day).*

Sept 29 *Chathurthi.*

At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071 381 3086/4608.

Sept. 12 *7.00pm Mandalin Recital by Srinivas.*

Sept. 18 *7.45pm Folk Music from Gujerat & Rajasthan.*

Sept. 19 *7.00pm Ghazals by Najma Akstar.*

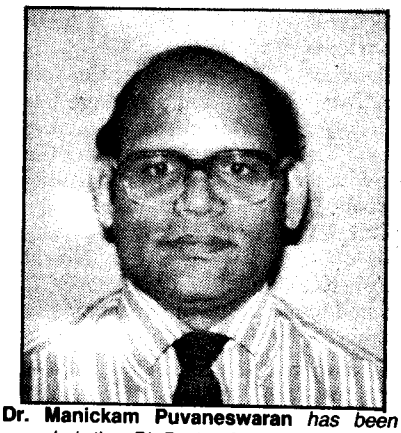
Sept. 26 *7.00pm Bharatha Natyam by Geetha Chandran.*

Prize Winners

The students of the London Veena Music Group trained by their teacher Mrs. Arunthathy Srikantha Rajah were judged the best of the 17 groups which participated at the 106th Annual Stratford & East London Music Festival 1992.

They are **L to R** *Abira Yogarajah (9 years), Mathini Manoharan (11 years), Lakshmi Srikantha Rajah (4 years), and Gayathri Thagarajah.*

Awarded Ph.D.



Dr. Manickam Puvaneswaran *has been awarded the Ph.D. in Climatology of the University of Sheffield, where for the last two years he has been engaged in a research project entitled 'Rainfall Fluctuations in the Homogeneous Regimes of Sri Lanka' which is based on a study of rainfall variations for the last 120 years with the aid of advanced statistical and computer analysis. His findings have useful applications in the agricultural planning of water management.*

Dr. Puvaneswaran read Geography at the University of Peradeniya, where subsequently he was an assistant lecturer for 2 years after which period he secured the M.A. degree. He was a Senior Lecturer in Climatology at the University of Jaffna, Research Fellow in the University of Mainz, Germany; post graduate student in the University of Queensland, Australia before proceeding to Sheffield.

Wanted

Wanted a Tamil typist with knowledge of word processing for a Tamil Newspaper. E 56 c/o Tamil Times.

Skylink Celebrate Introduction of New KLM Flights to Bombay & Calcutta.

Skylink Travel Ltd., the General Sales Agents for KLM in the UK & Ireland, recently celebrated the introduction of new KLM flights to Bombay & Calcutta. Skylink were recently appointed sales agents for the national carrier **Air Lanka.**

Skylink's campaign to serve all the destinations world wide of both Airlines is being spearheaded by its new Marketing Manager, Mr. S. Sivasubramaniam, formerly of Sivaraj Travel, popularly and endearingly called 'Siva' by his numerous clients.

Seen above at the launch (L. to R.) Ms. Loraine MacCallum, (KLM Marketing Development Manager), Mr. Siva (Skylink Marketing Manager), Mr. P.L. Cornwall (KLM UK Passenger Sales Manager), Mr. G.S. Bhambra (Skylink Managing Director), Mr. P.L. Dhiman (General Manager), Mr. S. Rauf (Financial Director) and J. Mobed (Commercial Manager).

Continued from page 23

because he is trying to fit into his own trap, the events and policies of MGR the actor and politician.

There can be no escaping the fact that Tamil Nadu's political stage has been closely interlocked with the theatre and cinema here ever since the Dravidian movement took deep political roots. The DMK made political capital out of the dialogue-writing skills of its leaders C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi and it was MGR who had to mouth them to capture the imagination of the youth of the 1960s.

Pandian has taken trouble, like a true researcher, to study so many publications and writings on MGR, but the pity is he has relied too much on some sources which do not carry the kind of weight or conviction to knowledgeable readers.

So far as his real life was concerned, one could go by the cinema magazines and interviews. But when it comes to his political career and particularly after he was swept to power in 1977, it is doubtful if anyone worth the name could have that kind of access or rapport with him to be in a position to convey MGR's mind and ideology, assuming he had one. The beauty of MGR the politician was that he remained a mystery and an enigma. Though there are any number of audio and video cassettes of his speeches, especially the recorded speeches in the wake of his launching the AIADMK in 1972 and his first election manifesto of 1977, they too defied understanding. His concept of 'Annaism', for instance, was another mystery.

The author touches the core of MGR the actor, when he summarises the three central themes – right to dispense justice, control over education and access to women – as the major planks of his image build up on the screen. Obviously, he is not able to come to grips with MGR the politician quite so easily. And that is why authors keep returning to this phenomenon to fathom its depths, right and wrong, comprehensible or not. At least, there is enough material to write about and a fan following that continues to this day, nearly five years after he died.

V. Jayanth.

Fact Finding Missions on Sri Lanka 1980-1992: an Annotated Bibliography – 1992. Sri Lanka Resource Centre, Oslo (Norway).

Dr Kumar Rupesinghe's useful introduction to this 31-page annotated report compiled by Berth Verstappen and Anton S. Philip selected from 47 fact-finding mission reports out of 57 on Sri Lanka, the isle of sorrows, covering the crucial years 1980 to 1992, is invaluable for scholars, activists and future missions. The years in question are the most horrendous and cover the period of institutionalised violence by the Sinhala-dominated state and the Sinhalese and Tamil insurrectionists, the JVP and the Liberation Tigers respectively.

The annotations provide the necessary **entrée** into the main contents of the missions' reports. They indicate how meaningful they will be to the various bodies interested not merely in human rights but on the downward slope of that once paradise island. Sri Lanka, the model Third World democracy is, a reading of these annotations, indicate nothing worse than the worst where the rule of law has been virtually suspended to make way for an indisciplined army, government-supervised vigilante squads and the terror of insurgents.

There is a truth that emerges in perusing this guide. The island's middle class and its westernised sector has either been beaten into silence or terrorised, or probably both aspects have replaced the once promising years of Westminster government.

This publication cannot be read without a feeling of revulsion, a turn of mind involving a mental nausea. So many innocents including women and children have been erased off the face of this earth, and for no good reason, without proper trials and judicial investigation. The only note of optimism is that a timely work such as this cannot but give faith and hope to the spirit of freedom in humankind, a candle that can never be put out even if these unfortunate humans are treated as if inmates of an animal farm. Time will produce the much needed change.

Prof. A. Jeyaratnam Wilson.

ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE

Dedication and Courage

Dear Editor,

I am ashamed at the delay in sending my message for your 10th Anniversary. I just could not write something merely formal because I have such an admiration, even veneration, for the *Tamil Times*.

I have been a regular reader of the journal for many years. One of the really encouraging and hopeful signs in this unutterably tragic situation Sri Lanka is in, is that it has thrown up many people on both sides with outstanding dedication and courage in the cause of truth and justice, who have never given up whatever the obstacles and threats. Some of these have made the ultimate sacrifice with their lives. But the most outstanding of those who still carry on is the *Tamil Times* collective. I call it a collective because though it is usually associated with one charismatic person, I think it must be the work of many people working together with intense dedication. Even so it seems to be a miracle that it has unfailingly been produced month by month over the years with such up-to-date and thorough coverage of and comments on events in its chosen field.

The fairness with which it deals with the different sides and parties involved is of a very high order. It is passionately devoted to the Tamil cause, but there is no rancour whatsoever against the Sinhala people and a healthy understanding of the moderate Sinhala view. This ability to understand both the Sinhala and Tamil as well as the Muslim causes at depth is a great combination. I am sure there are far more of such people on all sides among us today than the media would allow us to know and that is the hope for the future.

It has been rightly critical of the LTTE when it needs to be, and this needed courage. But it has also always felt that LTTE should have a fair hearing. This has not only been because of Voltaire's famous dictum which it has taken as its motto. It is, I think, a recognition of the fact that the LTTE has had so much ranged against it and stood up to it with such notable heroism and persistence. It is also a recognition of the fact that the LTTE stands for more than the leadership, which is so often mistaken, but for large numbers of people committed to a struggle for their rights. This can also be said in various degrees of certain other Tamil groups and parties. But above all it can be said of the Tamil people, who have come through so much suffering and betrayal at the hands of so many on all sides, but are still a factor too be reckoned with, that they haven't given up.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev. Yohan Devananda
World Solidarity Forum on Sri Lanka,
23A Senanayake Avenue,
Nawala, Sri Lanka.

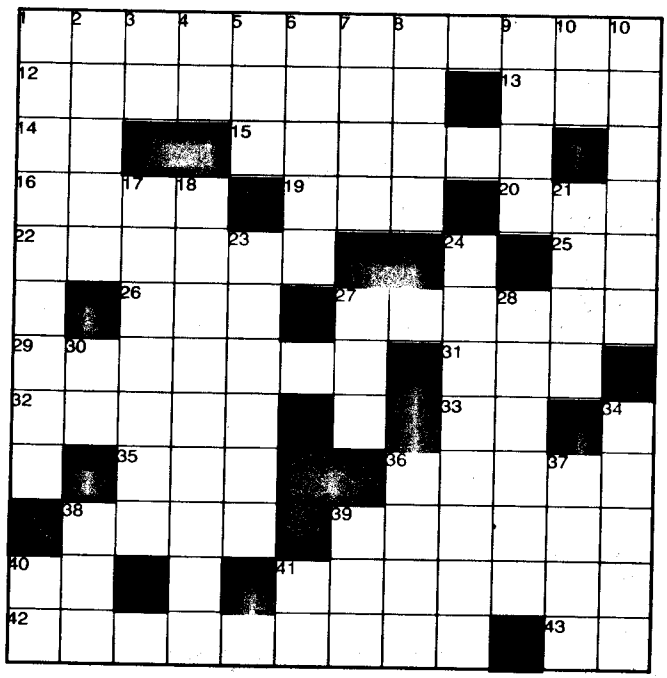
Closing date for completed grid and coupon to be received is 30 September 1992.

Answers and the name of the winner – first all correct entry pulled out of a bag – will be announced in the October 1992 issue.

The winner will receive a prize of £10.00 sterling.

All entries should be sent to: Tamil Times, P.O. Box 121, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD, UK.

QUIZ CROSSWORDS – No. 19. Compiled by: Richards



Across.

1. Market town in Thenmaradchy, North Sri Lanka (12)
12. Suburban township, South Sri Lanka (8)
13. Possible (3)
14. Ut supra, as above (2)
15. Puzzling and ambiguous (6)
16. The tide that occurs during the first and last quarter of the moon (4)
19. Jaffna peninsula falls within this climatic zone (3)
20. Deity in Sanskrit (3)
22. The village of Somasundera Pulavar in East Jaffna (6)
25. A future queen popularly! (2)
26. A constellation near Scorpious in the Southern hemisphere (3)
27. Devil dancing ceremony in South Sri Lanka (6)
29. A protein related to the skin, hair and nails (7)
31. Short native (3)
32. An organic base formed by replacing one or more of the hydrogen atoms (5)
33. Non liquet, it is not clear, abb. (2)
35. Cotangent, abb. (3)
36. Like kosher to the Jews this is to the Muslims (5)
38. Heat in disarray (4)
39. Jaffna's civil airport is now a base of the Sri Lanka Air Force (6)
40. Altostratus, briefly (2)
41. Feeling of unease or sickness (7)
42. Retailer market town on the road from Manipay to Sithankerny, North Sri Lanka (9)
43. Operational Research abb. (2)

Down:

1. Northern farmer's pride and Sri Lanka's largest producer market (9)
2. Eighth century Hebrew prophet (5)
3. Indicates period from midnight to midday (2)
4. Briefly, the State of Virginia in the US (2)
5. A period of time (3)
6. Historic capital of Sri Lanka – the last one to fall to the foreigner (5)
7. An assassinated Tamil leader, popularly (4)
8. Cautious and wary (4)
9. An organism whose form has been affected by its environment (4)
10. Egyptian sun god (2)
11. A farming village in North Sri Lanka became the site of a well known hospital for women (6)
17. Greed (7)
18. The home of Navajeevanam in the Vanni area of Sri Lanka (6)
21. Prepare text for publication (4)
23. Dormant (6)
24. Major lagoon fishery landmark in Jaffna (8)
27. High explosive (3)
28. Vast open stretch of land linked with many weird stories in the Vadamaradchy region (6)
30. Printer's measure (2)
34. Aviator (5)
36. ——fian, a chalcolithic culture 5000-4500 BC in the Syrian region (4)
37. In addition (4)
38. Burnt residue (3)
39. God of the fields and flocks in Greek mythology (3)
40. Alternate current (2)
41. A higher qualification in the arts discipline (2)

Quiz Crosswords – 17: Solutions.

Across: 1. Pomegranates. 11. Ambalavi. 12. Me. 13. Remex. 14. Bum. 15. Apple. 18. JA. 19. Wary. 20. Murunga. 22. Sly. 24. Etna. 25. Frisson. 28. Goof. 29. Ann. 31. Asura. 33. Did. 36. Black Colombo. 39. Saves. 40. Donald. 41. Passion. 42. Tee.

Down: 1. Papaws. 2. Om. 3. MB. 4. Early. 5. Glee. 6. Ram. 7. Avenues. 8. Nix. 9. Emu. 10. Sembatan. 14. Banana. 16. Palm. 17. Pry. 18. Juno. 21. RTS. 23. Croaks. 25. Forces. 26. If. 27. Jabs. 28. Guava. 30. Noble. 32. Slap. 33. Dodo. 34. Ilon. 35. Don. 37. Mat. 38. Ode.

No Winner.

Continued from page 22

(which the writer attended at its interviews) has identified the following as the **5 major asylum-seeking groups in the UK:**

1) KURDS/IRAQIS
2) IRANIANS
3) GHANAIANS
4) SOMALIS & ANGOLANS
5) SRI LANKAN TAMILS

Other groups comprise, Turks, Indians, Pakistanis, Latin Americans, East Europeans, other Africans etc.

The proposed UK 'asylum bill' which the present government is pledged to table in Parliament is claimed to meet the twin need to expedite the decision making procedure without watering down its obligations under the UN convention. In short, to strike a balance between 'procedural expedition' and 'procedural fairness'. The government while trying to clear the back-log will also strive to prevent what is now referred to as 'gross abuse of the system' by those seeking an economic haven in the UK.

The proposed measures include:

(a) a strict time-frame for the determination of the applications **and** the appeal process combined viz. the 12 weeks 'fast-track procedure';

(b) prevent asylum-seekers coming via 'a third country';

(c) a more stringent enforcement of the 'Carriers' Liability Act' i.e. heavier fines on airlines bringing in people without documents;

(d) stricter criteria for determining whether the asylum seeker comes within the definition and scope of refugees/asylum seekers in the Geneva Convention of 1951;

(e) finger-printing of asylum seekers – to prevent the abuse of multiple applications being made for income and housing benefits; and

(f) a drastically curtailed appeals procedure and provisions for prompt deportation.

A strong opposition is building up in Britain against the above measures both among liberal minded Parliamentarians, particularly those representing Labour and also 'marginal' constituencies and among London's expatriate community. The above measures are considered 'draconian', 'conflicting with the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1951 to which Britain is a signatory' and against the principles of a humanitarian track record for which Britain has earned a reputation so far. An 'Action Committee' has reportedly been formed by London's Tamil community to meet the above challenges in the draft bills. It may be recorded in this connection that the House of Lords set its seal on asylum seekers in the now famous CROWN vs. SIVAKUMARAN case when 5 Tamil asylum seekers whom the Home Office forcibly deported to SRI LANKA in 1988 successfully won their case when they established that on their being returned to Sri Lanka, they had undergone torture and persecution. The court ordered on that occasion that they be brought back to UK and they in fact returned.

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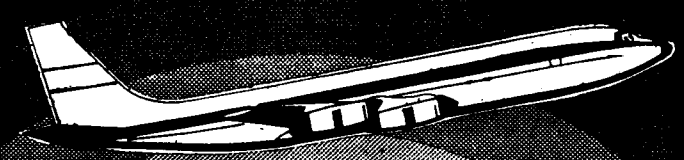

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